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The Camp Doctor.

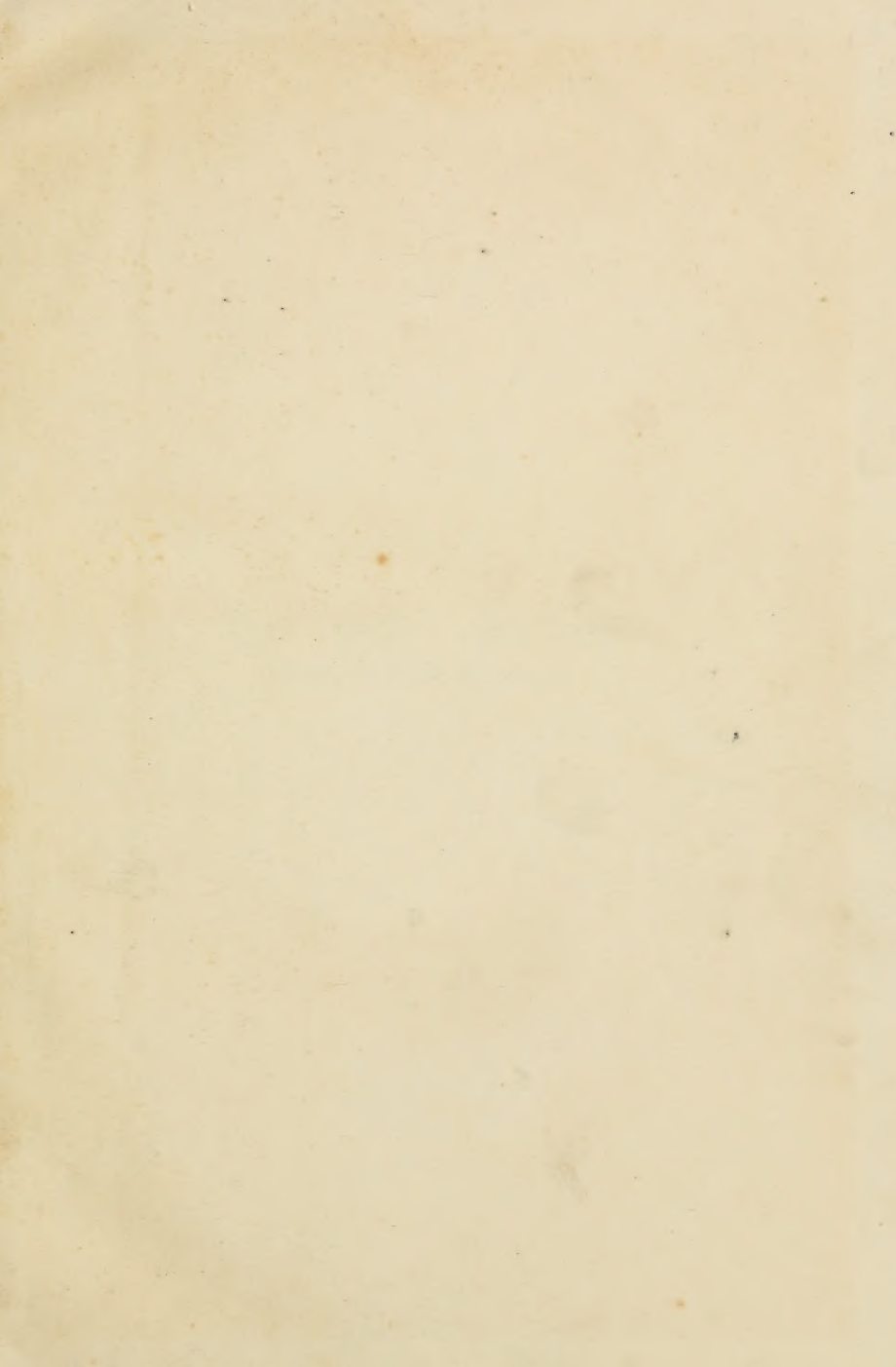


By
E. RYERSON Young

F. E. Thornton

at Present From
Auntie Dyson

April 1910.



THE CAMP DOCTOR
AND OTHER STORIES

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AND OTHER STORIES



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HE RIFLE WAS WRENCHED QUICKLY OUT OF HIS
HANDS.

[See page 26.]

'THE CAMP DOCTOR'

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

E. RYERSON YOUNG

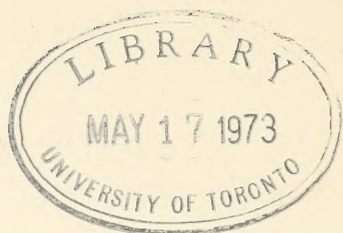
Author of 'Duck Lake,' etc.

With Illustrations by J. MACFARLANE

LONDON

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

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DEDICATED
WITH WARMEST AFFECTION
TO
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

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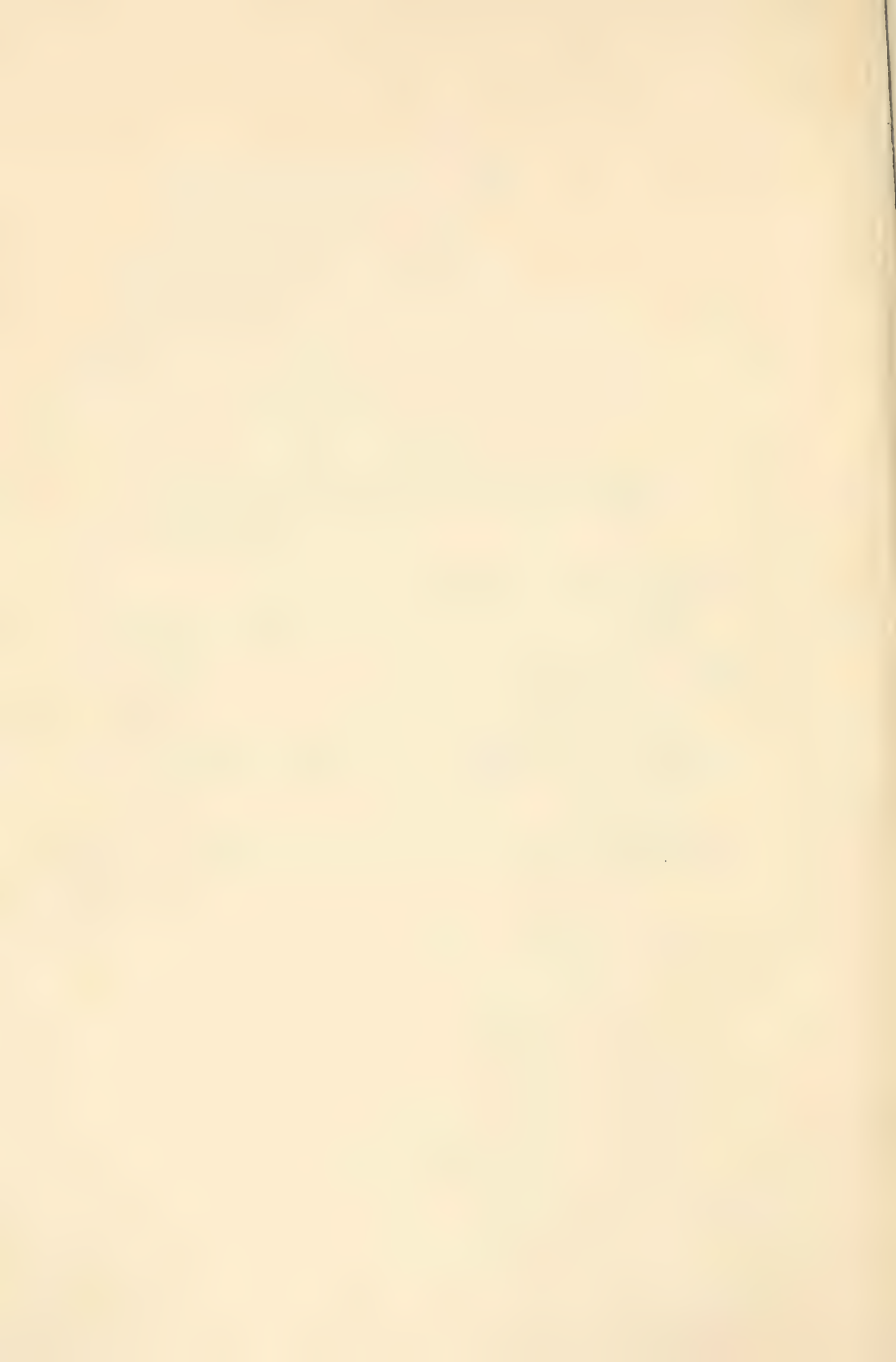
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THE CAMP DOCTOR

I

THE CAMP DOCTOR

FOREMAN HICKS, the big boss, smiled a peculiar, sneering smile when he saw the man whom the Company had sent up to be their camp doctor. He was small, red-headed, and thin-cheeked. The idea of having a doctor in the camp was met with a storm of opposition from the men, and so the man who was the fulfilment of that idea was an object of disapprobation. Dr. Squills carefully examined his ground. It was in the forest primeval in New Ontario, forty-five to fifty miles inland from the north shore of the Georgian Bay. He was placed in charge of five camps. These were constructed on the regular plan. Each camp had five or more low log buildings—the cook-house and dining-room in one building with bunks for cook and cookee in one end, the sleeping shack for the men, the blacksmith shop and the stable, and an extra building used as a store, office and sleeping-place for the clerk, foreman, and scaler, and for any distinguished visitors.

A case of typhoid fever proved to the doctor that he must have a separate place to attend his patients, and accordingly he agitated for a building to be used exclusively as a hospital. The managers laughed at his request, and put him off, but a general epidemic, which threatened to stop their lumbering operations, soon brought the Company to see the need of a properly equipped hospital, and to detail a gang of men to clear land at the central, No. 1 Camp, and erect such a building as the doctor wished.

The primeval man, and especially the lumberman, does not like to have his prerogative over his own body limited. Camp bosses know this, and have to act accordingly. Many lumbermen will rather forego wages than be made into tools, or mere machines, like factory hands. Given liberty to do work in his own way, the lumberman will yield work that few can equal, but you must not restrain his liberty to live and do as he likes.

So the doctor got into trouble. He saw too much evil of one kind or another creeping into the camp, and he determined that the camp should be cleansed, and that men who had vermin on them should be especially subjected to medication. The doctor had the camp carpenter make him a splendid wooden bath-tub, and he ordered all the men to use it. The idea met with opposition at once. A few who had learned, after the typhoid epidemic, to believe in the doctor, submitted to the bath, but others did not. Again some of the managers objected to the doctor's radical measures. The

doctor told the managers to send a representative to sleep with the men. They did so, and thereafter the doctor's wishes were enforced, and men who would not submit to the doctor's cleansing measures were given the only alternative of leaving the camp. In this way the doctor secured cleanliness in all his camps, and its beneficial effects upon the general health were immediate. Whenever new men came in, they were sent to the doctor, and many a row ensued, but the end was invariably the same: the man had to submit to the doctor or leave. This added nothing to the doctor's popularity, and when the men realized that every month, to pay the doctor, a portion of their wages, no matter if it were only a fraction of a dollar, was set aside, they grumbled and complained.

The doctor was persistently annoyed by the way in which his medicines were delayed. Camp stuff, iron for the blacksmith, hay and oats for the horses, and everything else seemingly, were regularly forwarded. The manner of getting these things in was by no means easy. They were brought up the river as far as possible by the Company's steamer, and then loaded on scows. In this way they were carried for some distance farther up the river. When this means of conveyance could no longer be used, the goods were placed on waggons and hauled over 'bush-roads'—rocks, roots, stumps—pathways through the wild woods that only pioneers would think of calling 'roads.' Still, over these the camp 'requisites'

THE CAMP DOCTOR

came with considerable promptness. But the doctor's medicines were delayed.

'Where are my medicines?' demanded the doctor one day from the teamster.

'I could only bring so much,' was the meek reply, 'and the blacksmith was in a hurry for his iron. I thought your box could wait for the next trip.'

'The men in the hospital might suffer the pains of hell for all you cared,' stormed the doctor. 'The blacksmith and every one else ought to stand aside for suffering men. Your turn will come, my man, and you'll know what it means to want proper medicine.'

But the teamster only lit his pipe and went to put away his horses. He did not bother about the significance of the doctor's words, for he had never had a day's illness in his life, and never expected to have. He had been 'blown up' many a time before, and that kind of talk on him was as water to a duck.

The doctor was warned by the Health Department that smallpox had broken out in the lumbering district. He was pleased now to think that he had fought the prejudices of his men, and had clean camps, and was thus in a better position to defy the disease. But he must be prepared, and so he wrote at once for a large consignment of medicines. These were promptly forwarded to the company's headquarters on Georgian Bay, but from that point the doctor could not get any trace of them. He made inquiries until he was tired,

and his fears were not lessened when he was informed of the steady approach of the terrible disease. It would soon be in his very neighbourhood, and he might be quarantined at any moment. He redoubled his efforts to see that every precaution was taken and also to keep strict guard over every man who came into his company's camps.

Then he determined to find out where his precious medicines were. Over the bush roads he walked. The autumn glories were on the land, and he would have enjoyed the privilege of stopping to commune with nature and feast his soul upon her beauties. The road took him around hill-tops, whence he saw beneath him silver lakes surrounded by graceful hills and stately forests, their leaves, here and there, coloured with crimson and gold, for as yet the bulk of the trees were the pines and spruces bearing their everlasting colours of the stronger, denser green. In his haste through the woods he startled the deer and the partridge from their resting-places. But on he hastened. He had not been used to such long tramps and his feet grew sore. He rested by a brook, removed his foot-gear, bathed his feet, and, after a short rest, pursued his journey.

Not finding the medicines at the Portage, the place where the scows unloaded, he went down the next morning with the scow to the Junction, where the steamboat landed its goods.

Here he met the steamboat and was informed that a couple of boxes of medicines and some

surgical instruments were on board somewhere. They had been put on board some time ago and no one had thought enough of them to take them off. They were likely in the nose of the vessel, shoved out of the way of other things.

Of course the doctor was annoyed. He stormed at the stupidity and hard-heartedness of the men.

'Instead of storming that way about your pills, it would be better for you to help the men,' said the foreman.

'I can do as much as you or any two of your lazy, stupid men,' said the doctor. Suiting the action to the words, he flung off his coat, and, jumping on the pile of stuff on the vessel, began to hand down the bales of hay and bags of oats.

'Hurry up, you lazy pork-eaters. Look out for your heads, for you don't use them to any purpose,' shouted the doctor.

He worked like a hero and gibed the men. He was far better at working with his hands than walking, and the night's rest had freshened him up. Two workmen retired and said that they were not going to work that way for any money, and left the foreman alone with the doctor. The doctor advantageously dropped the bales and bags so that the foreman could easily place them on the scow, but he kept up a continual stream of banter upon the lazy workmen, and did not spare the foreman who had taunted him.

At last the foreman had more than he could stand, and he too retired. He went into the

Company's storehouse, which was on the shore. Here, unknown to the doctor, was one of the managers.

'That doctor is nothing but a blamed hayseed!' said the foreman, as he wiped his steaming brow with his big red handkerchief. 'I believe he's drunk.'

'Whew!' whistled the manager. 'What's up now? The doctor is a farmer's son, sure enough, but he is a teetotaler for all that.'

'Well, I believe he's drunk now, for no man not drunk would work and talk as he has the last two hours.'

The manager and the foreman found an advantageous place from which to watch quietly the doctor's operations. As the foreman left he had sent back the two workmen to their tasks, and the doctor was keeping both of them busy as he dumped the bales and bags over to them in quick succession.

'Well, well,' exclaimed the manager, 'he is a worker.'

'He's drunk,' reiterated the foreman.

'No. He has been trained in Old Ontario, where they know what real work is. But what is he down here for, anyway?'

'I don't know,' lied the foreman. Then he added sheepishly, 'Unless it is those medicines of his. They are always getting in our way.'

'Because you don't ship them on,' put in the manager.

'Well, when the fellows can only take so much,

something has to wait. Grub's more important than medicines.'

'And chewing-tobacco than either, eh! Let us go out and keep the doctor from killing himself.'

'What are you doing on that boat?' demanded the manager of the doctor.

'Teaching these idle-mongers how to work. Look out, Bill; here, Jake.'

'You ought to be in camp looking after your patients.'

'I would if you would look after my medicines and see them sent on properly. Look out, Jake. Pinch yourself and see if you are awake.'

And the bags kept coming down in quick succession.

'Come down, I want to talk to you,' said the manager.

'Then send a man up here who knows how to work.'

With this parting shaft at the men, the doctor picked up his coat and came ashore. His reputation as a worker and as being able to do something else than make pills was now firmly established.

'What's your hurry for the medicines?' kindly asked the manager.

'Great, indeed,' replied the doctor. 'The first thing, you know, your camps will be quarantined. Then what will you do with those bull-headed men? Thank heavens, I have them cleaned and most of them re-vaccinated. But some may catch the smallpox just the same.'

'All right, doctor. Go and look after things in the camps and I'll send on the medicines.'

'No, sir. I've come all this way for those medicines. I've been promised them time and again, and I'll only go back with them.'

As usual the doctor had his way. The men had to forget everything else until the boxes of medicine were found—under a great pile of oats, flour, and other miscellaneous provisions. They were placed on the scow that the doctor had helped to load. A gang of river men was detailed, and the boat was sent up the river.

The doctor had only been absent from the camps three days, but that was long enough for some mischief to be done. A new-comer, a tall, fair-haired, muscular fellow, had appeared at Camp No. 4, Foreman Hicks' camp.

'Where did he come from?' demanded the doctor of the teamster.

'I thought he had hired with McDonald of East River, but he says that he has just come north.'

The doctor made haste to see the man.

'Is Billy McDonald's hand better?' he asked the big man bluntly.

'Yes, he's all right again,' promptly replied the fellow, not perceiving that his answer betrayed him.

'Now,' said the doctor, sternly, 'you get your traps together, and as quickly as you know how, and hustle back to McDonald's camp.'

'I've not come from there,' declared the man.

'How did you know of McDonald's hand, then?' said the doctor, half-mockingly. 'I have no time

to quarrel. You get right back there or we'll make you.'

The man swore and said that he would not go.

'Bring me your gun, Charley,' said the doctor, addressing the clerk. 'Tom,' he said to the cook, 'make us up a package of meat and buns.'

The clerk appeared with a rifle.

'Now, stranger,' said the doctor, 'get your turkey and march!'

The man got his bag of clothes and the doctor marched him ten miles through the woods to McDonald's camp. On the way the man protested, begged and pleaded, offered all the money he had, if the doctor would let him run away. He promised to leave the country and never go near a camp again. But the doctor was inexorable. This man had broken quarantine, and into quarantine he had again to go.

'Here's your man, McDonald,' shouted the doctor from the woods. 'You ought to keep a more careful guard over your men. If we have smallpox I shall blame you for your negligence.'

McDonald swore at the man for running away and ordered him into camp.

The doctor hastened home. Fearing that evil had been carried into Camp No. 4, he disinfected it and had it thoroughly scrubbed out. He also rebuked Foreman Hicks for not being more careful of the men he employed.

'But we want men the worst way,' he protested.

'I don't care if you want ten thousand men. I don't want the smallpox here.'

The stranger, however, had moved only too freely amongst the workmen, and one after another fell victims to the disease.

Camp No. 4 was isolated. A large tent was pitched in a convenient place and turned into an isolation hospital for the patients. The foreman was in despair, for his work was far behind and the outbreak meant severe loss to the Company and great danger to the men.

'You must not allow a man to go away or to mingle with the men of the other camps,' said the doctor to the foreman. 'Your stupidity has now caused enough mischief. Don't let your negligence cause more. If necessary patrol your camp with a gun.'

The foreman winced under the doctor's words, but he realized the danger and did as he was bidden.

Camp No. 4 was under strict quarantine, and though men tried to steal away they were quickly brought back and kept in the camp. It was a terrible time all over the country. In some camps the lumber work was entirely paralyzed, while in others it was done half-heartedly. Over all the land an undefined dread reigned, and men thought of their homes far away, of loved ones, and felt that they were being cruelly treated in being shut up and kept in log camps at the point of a gun.

The doctor, while hard upon those who neglected their duty, was most cheerful to the obedient and indefatigable in his efforts to stay the disease and heal the afflicted. He placed the clerk, who had a

little knowledge of medicines, over the hospital at Camp No. 1, and ordered a strict guard over all the other camps, while he gave most of his attention to Camp No. 4 and the isolation hospital.

Week after week the evil continued, but because of the doctor's energy and the men's obedience to his orders the other camps were not affected. The doctor seemed to take no sleep. His eyes sunk deeper in his head and dark rings were around them.

'The doctor is killing himself for us,' said one of the men to Foreman Hicks.

'Oh, may God help him,' groaned the foreman.

'I didn't know you were a praying man, boss.'

'I never was till now. But I vowed to God last night that if He would spare the doctor, He might take me.'

'I hope it's not as bad as that.'

'I hope not, may God grant.'

But the fight was severe and the men were rebellious. Their liberty was cramped and they could not see why they should be kept there and their lives endangered. Only men of higher intellectual culture and strong will can be ruled by altruistic ideals.

The doctor was everywhere, encouraging here, directing there, and guarding everywhere.

'When will the end of this come?'

'When the snow comes,' was the doctor's brisk reply.

The foreman prayed for the snow to come. On the first day of December it came, and snow

was never more welcomed than by John Hicks, foreman of Camp No. 4.

McDonald lost five men through the disease, and in other camps to the east and west men died; but Camp No. 4 was the only one under the doctor's care affected, and all his patients were in a fair way to recovery.

But when the snow came the doctor collapsed. He sank rapidly, and it seemed as if he were going to die.

Then suddenly the lumbermen realized that though the doctor had ruled them with a rod of iron, he was their friend, their best friend, and a true brother. While the doctor was dangerously ill they had less heart to work than when the smallpox raged at its worst.

Foreman Hicks followed the doctor when he was brought from Camp No. 4 to the hospital at No. 1. Here he constituted himself as the doctor's nurse, and no nurse was ever more faithful or mother more tender than was the big boss.

The managers expostulated with him and wanted him to look after No. 4, but he said—

'No, not while the doctor is down. My neglect let in the smallpox, and tending that nearly killed him. When he's up again I'll go back, but not till then.'

Under Hicks's nursing the doctor steadily improved, and after he was strong enough to give instructions as to medicines and care, his recovery was more rapid.

When the Government Health officer inspected

the camp he declared the smallpox patients fully recovered, and ordered the isolation tent to be burned.

To see the fire of destruction, Foreman Hicks wrapped the doctor in his blankets and carried him over. When the lumbermen saw the doctor there was a demonstration such as only simple, honest hearts can give to loyal brotherhood and heroic service.

II

TRUE TO HIS WORD

A NEW arrival had made his appearance in our quiet little Indian village. His appearance and reputation were of a distinctly unsavoury description. He was a half-breed Indian from 'The Plains,' with a concomitant reputation of being a horse-stealer, a buffalo-runner, and a generally bad man. Some were found who declared that whatever was bad in his French and Indian ancestry, found a climax in him.

However that may be, and whatever Baptiste was, he had found his way into our vicinity; and our peaceful Indian village was exceedingly disturbed at his presence.

Our agent had a beautiful horse which he pastured in a field behind the Indian village. The field was shaped somewhat like the figure 8. Two plots of ground had been found suitable for pasture, and these were connected by a short road or lane. The pasture fields and lane were enclosed by a snake fence.

When Baptiste came to the village it was summer-time, and Dolly, the agent's horse, was

enjoying the pleasures of her pasture. When the half-breed saw the horse, the rider's blood was up. It had been a long time since he had been on a good horse and had had a good run over the plains after the buffalo; and now to see this splendid horse in a large pasture! The temptation was too strong to be resisted.

So securing a birch switch, he cautiously approached the horse, caught it and bridled it in approved Indian style. This was done by tying the end of his long sash belt in the horse's mouth. Mounting the horse, he rode round and round one field, dashing through the lane, and round and round the other field, and then back again.

With considerable excitement and trepidation, some of the Indians hastened to the agent and told him what Baptiste was doing to his horse. The agent at once sprang from his desk, seized his hat, and started for the field. The Indians were now in a state of fear.

'Be careful,' they said. 'This is a wild man from the plains. Be careful. If you do anything to him he may kill you, or in some way try to get revenge.'

Thus they poured out their solicitous fears, followed their friend for a distance, then stopped to watch the outcome.

Entering the field, he commanded Baptiste to stop and get off the horse. As the half-breed did so, he warned him that if he did not leave that horse alone while he was in the Indian village, he must be prepared to stand the consequences.

The young man quickly slipped from the horse, took his belt from the horse's mouth, and left the pasture. The agent patted his panting horse and saw her quietly enjoying her pasture ere he returned home.

Baptiste lingered around the village with the Indians. He tried to keep away from that pasture field; but somehow or other his feet would frequently carry him that way, and he would lean on the rails and watch that beautiful horse for hours together. There was no other horse within two hundred miles. The country was a poor, rocky, scrub-wood region, where the Indians make a living by hunting and fishing. In this way it was so different from the life, breadth, and freedom of the prairies. So for Baptiste there was no spot so attractive as the broad pasture, especially when Dolly was in it.

The agent kept the horse for his own pleasure and use. On her in summer he rode around to see how the Indians were prospering in their small farming efforts. In winter he harnessed her to the cariole he had made for her, and in which, when wrapped in his splendid furs, he took great pleasure in driving over the frozen lakes and rivers.

For a few days Baptiste managed to restrain his passion for riding; but again the temptation was too great, and he caught the horse and was soon galloping round and round the field.

Again word was carried to the agent that Baptiste was racing his horse as if he were chasing buffalo.

The agent hastily went out.

When the horse was stopped, the agent said—
'Did I not tell you to leave the horse alone?'

'Yes.'

'Well, if I ever catch you on that horse again, I'll knock you down ; do you hear?'

With that he turned, patted his horse, and called one of his Indians to put her into the stable.

The threat seemed to have a restraining effect upon Baptiste, for he did not go near the fields for over a week. In his conversation with the Indians, however, he made many inquiries about their agent. This elicited many instances of his kindness to them ; how he cared for them, looked after their sick, helped their children in school, and in many other ways had shown himself their friend.

Baptiste had heard the Indians say that their agent was a man of his word, but he reasoned that a man who was so kind as the Indians said this man was, surely would not hurt him.

After two weeks had elapsed, word came again to the agent that the buffalo-runner was on his horse, galloping round the pasture 'like mad.'

With much indignation the agent seized his hat and started for the field. Fire danced in his eyes, and the Indian informant began to feel sorry that he had brought the news. He had heard the threat that the agent had made the last time the culprit was caught, and he feared that if his master struck, the avenging blow would be more deadly, and so he again besought the agent to be careful and not do anything rash.

The pasture was reached. The man was riding at a furious rate around the farther field. Quickly the agent passed through the field nearer the home, and made his way partly up the lane and hid in the fence. When the rider and horse came running through, he ran out, threw up his hands, and called the horse to stop. The horse, which had been trained to stop immediately on his command, obeyed the word. The agent seized the horse with his right hand, and dealt the rider such a blow with his powerful left, that sent him flying off on the opposite side of the horse.

Without a word the agent led his horse quietly away. As he turned from the lane, he glanced back and saw the half-breed sitting in a corner of the fence, rubbing his jaw.

From that moment some of the Indians felt it incumbent upon them to do detective duty, for they looked for vengeance. But their work was love's labour lost. Baptiste showed no signs of immediate revenge, and the surprise of those Indians was great when they considered the reputation that Baptiste had.

After a few days' longer stay Baptiste, fearing that his welcome had been worn out, left for a new place, seeking for new adventures.

The winters in that land are long and very cold. The one that followed the visit of Baptiste was a peculiarly severe one. It had set in early, and the bitterness of the cold was extreme. The firewood of the country is very poor, and a great deal has to be used to keep the people warm. To

secure this wood the agent sent a number of Indian choppers into the patches of forest where the best firewood was to be found.

One day when the agent was in his house, trying to eat his breakfast and keep warm, the Indian servant announced with great trepidation that Baptiste, the half-breed, was outside and wanted to see him.

'Let the man wait,' was the reply, 'and bring me another cup of tea.' (Coffee for breakfast or for any other time was unknown in that land.)

After he had leisurely finished his breakfast, and having braced up his pride to the 'injured' point, remembering the way his horse had been ridden, the agent went out and faced the half-breed.

Before the agent could say anything Baptiste bowed and said—

'You know that I am a poor man from the plains.'

'Yes; what of that?' said the agent in a cold dignified manner.

'Well, I'm a poor man and can't get anything to do, and the hard winter is here. I hoped that you might have something that I could do.'

'What can you do?'

'Most anything.'

'Are you afraid of work?'

'No, sir.'

'Well, then, you'll find a few axes in my shed. Pick out one to suit you, and take the trail up the river to the camp. Tell Martin, the foreman, that

I sent you. If you please him you can help chop my winter's supply of wood.'

Baptiste was so glad to hear these words, so full of hope, that he could only bow his thanks and back away to do as he was ordered.

Some time after, Foreman Martin came in to see his master.

'You have Baptiste with you?' said the agent, after some business matters were disposed of.

'Yes, sir.'

'How is he getting on?'

'Splendidly. He is the best chopper I have in the camp.'

'Well, I am glad to hear it. Your fears about his revenging my blow have been groundless, and have not materialized.'

'No, and we have had quite a time with him in the camp. We asked him what he thought of you, and he said most enthusiastically—

'I like him fine.'

"But," we said, "didn't he hit you and knock you down?"

"Yes, he did, he did. He hit mighty hard, too. But he said he would; he said he would. He's true to his word. I like him fine."

And the agent and his foreman laughed at the thought of the man's appreciation of the agent standing by his words, even though he was the recipient of some punishment.

'Has he ever said anything about the horse?' asked the agent.

'He often speaks of her; tells over her fine

points, and says that the Indian boys are too irregular in their care, and do not look after her as they should. They are not trained to take care of horses. They treat her like they do their dogs. Give her a lot of food at once, and then let her starve.'

'I've often thought the same myself, Martin. Tell Baptiste I want to see him as soon as he can get here.'

Martin felt that he had given his own countrymen too hard a name, but he had merely told the truth, reported Baptiste's words fairly, and had not shielded the negligence of those who had so poorly cared for Dolly.

When Martin reached the camp he gave the order to Baptiste with such curtness and promptness that the poor fellow was dismayed. What had he done to be so quickly sent away? Had he not worked hard? What did the master want to see him for? With many forebodings he journeyed on the homeward trail, and at last reached the agent's house.

The agent was watching for him, and when Baptiste approached the door he opened it, invited him in, gave him a seat, and at the same time ordered a cup of tea to be brought. With his own hands he cut and spread some bread. Baptiste could not understand his treatment. After he had partaken of the tea and the bread, the master said—

'I want to beg your pardon for my impetuosity, my sudden anger in hitting you last summer.'

'But you said you would,' stammered Baptiste;
'you said you would, if I rode your horse again.'

'You won't try to ride her to death again, will you?'

'No, sir; to please you, sir.'

'Well, Baptiste, how would you like to take care of her all the time?'

Baptiste could not contain himself. His eyes danced, and, jumping to his feet, he danced too—so much so that the agent sprang forward to relieve him of the cup and plate, lest he should let them fall to the floor.

'Me. I'll tend and feed her like no Indian here can. Give me the chance.'

Baptiste has the chance, and there seem to be only two beings in the world of whom that devoted half-breed takes any cognizance: one is that Indian agent, whom he almost worships as a man 'true to his word'; and the other is the agent's horse, Dolly, whom he idolizes.

III

THE KNEELING DEER

FROM a point of vantage, wrapped in his great blanket, Mustagan, an Indian, was intently watching the movements of some deer. Before him in a gently sloping valley, where the trees were smaller and of a second growth, there was an immense deer-yard. The heavy-coloured pines and spruces around Mustagan had their boughs weighted down with snow and icicles, which shone like emeralds and mother-of-pearl in the clear silvery moonlight. Scores of deer were moving about, chiefly trying to find a warm place in which to lie down, for the cold was many degrees below zero.

Mustagan had been watching the deer for some hours, and it was now nearly midnight. He was roused by the crunching sound of a man walking on snowshoes. Away through the spruces he saw a young white man swinging along at a good rate. His head was held high, and he was careless of the noise he was making, and ignorant of the fact that he was near a deer-yard.

‘Hush!’ said Mustagan, putting his fingers to

his lips, and then pointing to the white man's snowshoes.

'Tom Morgan will hush when he likes,' replied the young white man.

Tom was a young hunter and fur-trader. He had run away from his home in Toronto, and was now in the woods of northern Ontario trying to find his fortune. Like most young traders he had mastered the Indian tongue. Just now, however, he was cutting across the country to find a bar and indulge in a Christmas spree. He was in a reckless mood, and seeing the Indian, determined to find out what he was doing.

'What are you doing here?' he demanded brusquely.

'This is Christmas Eve, I am told,' said Mustagan, quietly. 'Mustagan is watching to see the wild deer kneeling to——'

'Ha, ha!' laughed Morgan, 'where'd you get that fool's yarn? You'll see the deer kneeling when you put a bullet in their neck—not before!'

Many of the deer plucked up their ears and started at the strange sound. Fire flashed in Mustagan's eyes.

'Hush!' he repeated in a more commanding tone, and rose from his kneeling posture. As he stood up, his blanket fell from his shoulders, revealing a tall, well-built Indian of perhaps thirty years of age. His features were strong and swarthy, but not unhandsome.

Unheeding the Indian's word and action, Tom stalked on until he came in view of the deer.

Then he suddenly dropped on the ground and hid behind a tree.

'Great place you got here,' he whispered, as he crawled up behind Mustagan. 'How many deer have you bagged?'

'Christmas Eve, this is. Indian no kill deer this night. Mustagan watch to see the wild deer kneel to the Prince of Peace.'

'You've killed no deer! You fool, and a score of deer within fifty yards! I'll have one, quick as Jack Robinson.'

Tom rose to his feet, swung his gun from his back, and was taking sight, when the rifle was wrenched quickly out of his hands and thrown into the snow.

'How dare you touch my gun?' he demanded, furious with rage.

'This is the night of the Peace-Child. Mustagan has not seen Him, but he must see Him soon.'

Tom moved to pick up his gun, but Mustagan stepped in front of him.

'Get out of my way!'

'You not shoot to-night.'

'I'll show you!' shouted Tom, in anger, and moved quickly to strike the Indian. Mustagan rose to his full height, towering head and neck over young Tom, and quietly awaited the assault. Tom, in his fury, made a misstep, one snowshoe caught the other, and he fell ignominiously into the snow at Mustagan's feet. He expected the Indian, whom he considered little better than a savage, to seize

his advantage and bury his tomahawk in his brains. But no such evil befell him. He was permitted to rise uninjured.

‘Where did you get that fool yarn of the kneeling deer?’ queried Tom, rising to his feet and looking sheepishly at the Indian.

‘From Baptiste.’

‘When did he say they would kneel?’

‘This night, Christmas Eve, at midnight.’

‘That hour will soon be here, so we’ll watch together.’

‘Good,’ said Mustagan.

He picked up his blanket, wrapped it around his shoulders, and resumed his place of watch, spreading out a corner of the blanket for Tom. Tom thought that he could have no better fun than to watch the deer with this strangely earnest and superstitious Indian. So he recovered his rifle, re-slung it, and accepted the offered seat on the blanket.

The two men had not been seated more than ten minutes when an arrow whizzed by Mustagan’s head and struck the tree in front of them, burying its flint head deep in the wood. Tom sprang to his feet, seized his gun, and looked around. Mustagan also arose. He coolly walked to the tree and, with his tomahawk, liberated the arrow.

‘Ugh!’ he exclaimed, after carefully examining it, and handed the arrow to Tom.

‘Whose arrow is it?’

‘Jakoos, the conjurer, his arrow.’

‘You mean——’

'Jakoos; he would kill me for watching the kneeling deer and for the Prince of Peace.'

Tom looked at Mustagan a moment, trying to comprehend.

'You mean that you are trying to find light and that you are persecuted by a murderous conjurer.'

'Jakoos likes not Mustagan,' said he, with a smile. 'He cheat and steal, beats drum and is no good. He promises peace, but I have tried his way. It is no good. No peace here.' (He tapped his breast.) 'Baptiste says Prince of Peace come to-night, and the wild deer kneel to Him.'

'How long have you been seeking peace?' asked Tom, with growing interest.

'Since so high,' said Mustagan, indicating the size of a boy. 'Try bear dance. No good. See marks on my breast.' (He opened his shirt, and showed great scars down his chest.) 'Put sticks in there, hung on horse-hair ropes from a pole for two days. Then was rolled in vinegar and had convulsions. All to be a brave and find peace. But no good, no braver and no peace in heart. Then I fasted in the woods four times. One day, two days, three days, four days, but it was no good. Indian's mind is dark, his heart is dark too, and full of fear, fear, fear. Mustagan got a wife and had children. Two got sick. Called in conjurers. They dress in skins of snakes, shake rattles and beat drums. Ugh! no good, children die.'

Mustagan turned his head, and swept his hand behind him to emphasize his loathing and disgust of the conjurers and their ways.

'Last summer,' continued Mustagan, 'I go on long trip for H.B.C.¹ I heard Baptiste sing a song and tell a story. Mustagan became all ears. I heard him again, one moon ago. I speak to Baptiste and ask him more. He tell me, Christmas Eve one moon hence, and at midnight, the Prince of Peace, He come and all the wild deer kneel to Him.'

Mustagan told his story with suppressed eagerness and passion. Tom listened intently, and when Mustagan finished he hung his head in perplexity. He now felt himself not in the presence of a superstitious Indian, but before a sincere soul struggling for the light—the most subduing of all experiences. Dissatisfied with the old pagan religion which gave him no peace of soul, Mustagan was grasping, like a drowning man at a straw, at a fantastic figment, a weird distortion of the truth. In his earnest search for truth he had incurred the displeasure of the upholders of the pagan religion, who now persecuted him and would even kill him. Tom also felt that Mustagan would sooner die than give up his search for the truth.

While Tom felt his admiration and awe of Mustagan grow, he also became ashamed of his own light-hearted indifference to the treasures of truth that had been his from his mother's knee, but which he had hastily thrown aside. Indifferent to Jesus Christ, he had soon become indifferent to his mother and father, home and other sacred ties,

¹ Hudson Bay Company.

and had run away to indulge the wildest of passions. And now, here in the wild woods, to meet a poor ignorant Indian, who had caught but a ray of truth, and that distorted, and to see him following it with a zeal that was stronger than the love of life. He felt himself reproved and humbled.

‘Would you like to hear more of the Prince of Peace from me?’ said Tom, timidly.

‘Do you know Him?’ asked Mustagan, eagerly, looking at Tom almost fiercely.

‘My mother knows Him, and I know something of Him.’

‘Speak, man, quickly. I want to hear.’

It was long since Tom had allowed his thoughts to dwell on the coming of our Lord Christ to the world. Still, the story of the Christ-child is never forgotten by those who hear it from infancy to boyhood. As he heard it then, he remembered it best, and, in that form, it was most suitable to the mind of Mustagan. Tom took little for granted, and with straightforward simplicity he told the great story, ever new and always wonderful in its mystery—God coming in the form of a child. The humble parents, the birth in the stable, the wise men and their brilliant star and munificent gifts, the shepherds, the angels and their song were all described. Mustagan drank in the story eagerly, almost breathlessly.

Only when Tom was through did Mustagan open his mouth to speak. Then it was to endeavour to reconcile what he had heard from Baptiste with this wonderful story of Tom’s, for

Mustagan's mind was still childlike and tenacious of the fantastic.

'And the deer kneel to the Son of God when He was born?' said Mustagan.

Tom was at a loss how to answer. He did not like to incorporate any such fancy into the story of Christ, and yet he did not think that it would hurt Mustagan to believe that the wild deer know enough to adore their Creator. He, however, told him again about the birth in the stable with the cattle, no doubt, quite near. While men could not find a place for the Lord of earth and heaven, the dumb animals made room for Him.

A new idea flashed upon Tom's mind. He had heard somebody say, he did not know how true it was, that some translators, knowing that northern Indians knew nothing of sheep and shepherds, described the shepherds of Bethlehem as Laplanders, and sheep as reindeer. Because the shepherds were watching on the hillside at night the Indians conceived that the deer must have been wild. The legend had confused the 'deer-keepers,' or 'deer-watchers,' kneeling to Christ on that Christmas morning, with the wild deer themselves. So Tom tried to explain it.

'Baptiste, he sang, "The wild deer kneeling."'

'Well,' said Tom in desperation, 'no doubt the deer of the woods and the hunters and the Indians are as welcomed by Him as are the shepherds of tame animals like sheep.'

Mustagan was deeply touched.

'He thought of Indians too, did He?'

'He certainly thought of us all, Mustagan,' said Tom, emphatically. 'He loves the Indian as much as the white man, and came to bless the one as much as the other.'

'Can I see Him to-night?' asked Mustagan.

'With the eye of the heart, not with the eye of the head. He says that He is nigh unto all them that call upon Him.'

'Will He hear me?' asked Mustagan in some surprise.

Tom's feelings had been deeply wrought upon during his recital and conversation. Memories of his mother, his home, and, above all, thoughts of the mercies of God who had followed him into that wild land, crowded into his mind. He felt himself a foolish, wicked, ungrateful prodigal. He could hardly wait to answer Mustagan's last question, for he was on his feet and wanted to be away.

'Yes, yes,' he said in anguish of soul, 'He'll hear you, Mustagan. May He hear me too.'

Then he rushed away into the woods and threw himself down in the snow, crying to God to forgive him and to speak peace to his heart.

Mustagan was greatly perplexed by what he saw. Here was a young man who knew about the Prince of Peace and yet seemed to be troubled in his heart the same as himself. He was tempted to go near the penitent and listen to his cries, but, remembering his own heart-struggles, he respected Tom's attempt to be alone. He feared, however, for the young white man in the cold; so he took his blanket and threw it over him. This left him

with little else, for he had few other clothes. However, he quietly left the young man and hastened towards his wigwam.

Tom spent the rest of the night in deep agony of soul, but ere the morning sun filled that day with his glory he had surrendered to Christ, and arose a new man.

'That blessed Indian,' he exclaimed, when he felt the blanket and realized what Mustagan had done.

With his heart beating with new love he hastily wrapped up the blanket and strapped it on his back with his rifle. Then he found the Indian's trail and followed it through the woods and over the hills for about ten miles, when it brought him to a small Indian village. After some search he was shown Mustagan's wigwam. When Tom saw him he hastened to him.

'You must have talked with the Peace-child, Mustagan.'

'Me!' exclaimed Mustagan.

'Yes, you, Mustagan. For it must have been He who told you to put your blanket over me and to walk home in the cold.'

'My heart has peace,' said Mustagan, quietly.

'May He soon give you joy such as I have,' said the happy white man.

'Tell me,' said Mustagan.

Tom told him of his early life, his wayward spirit, and God's goodness in pardoning him. By the grace of the Holy Spirit Mustagan saw God's forgiving love and how it was to be received.

'The wild deer kneels with the tame,' he said.
'Pray for me.'

The two men knelt in that wigwam, and the Father heard them and sent the spirit of the Peace-child to each.

One week later, on a bright New Year's morning, Tom walked into his father's home, to the joy and surprise of all, and as he told the story of Mustagan, of the legend of the kneeling deer, and of his conversion, his mother drew him close to her breast.

IV

THE COLPORTEUR'S LAST VISIT

ONCE again the old Colporteur appeared in town. Most heartily was he welcomed by all those who knew him and had received his blessing in days gone by.

As a stalwart man, in the prime of life, he had first come with his wife into the bush of the Highlands of Ontario, and had hewn out for himself a little home and farm. He was not unmindful of the blessings of God, which were precious to his heart ; and, when Sunday came, he sought out his neighbours, some five, some fifteen miles away. With them he spoke of God's love and prayed. Leaving a tract and a benediction at every settler's home at which he called, he wended his way homeward, and on Monday morning resumed his work on his little farm.

In summer and winter it was the same. He felt himself under necessity to visit these scattered sheep. He cared not to know any religious sect. The people had immortal souls ; they were of God's flock. God loved them all, and wanted them to love Him. That was all that was necessary

for him to know. Roads there were none; and bush paths are not always certain. Sometimes the snow was breast-high, and the flesh called for a halt; but the spirit urged him on. In the settler's home he would pull off his boots and empty them of water and snow, and then, after warming his feet and delivering his message and blessing, he would again pull on his boots and go on his way to the next settler.

In his pocket he always carried a pistol, for the woods had many wolves and bears. There were wilder men, but in his presence they forgot their evil ways and vile words, and were silent until he passed.

To the Upper Canada Bible and Tract Society he wrote of the wants of his people, and from them he received a generous supply of Christian literature. This he gladly and carefully distributed. His rounds came to be known, and the settlers, ten, twenty, thirty, sometimes as many as forty persons, would gather from miles around to meet the good man, to listen to him read the Word of God, and talk to them of their personal duty and religious privileges.

His Sunday walk grew to be twenty-five miles in extent, and after his evening service he had nine miles to walk to his home. In the wee small hours, full of thankfulness to God that his people were doing so well, the good man returned, and then on the next day he went to his own farm with renewed zeal. He was known for miles

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around as 'Father Douse,' and 'that good man who gives tracts.'

The opening up of the copper mines in Algoma and Nipissing almost depopulated certain parts of Muskoka. Settlers, who had been struggling with the bush and rock-strewn, rock-bound soil, finding it hard to get a living from the farm, suddenly remembered that they had mastered different trades. They had been blacksmiths, carpenters, boiler-makers, and miners, in England, and now that, to them, fabulous wages were offered for mechanics, they hastened northward to the centres of mining operations.

Successful in farming beyond most of his fellows, the good man was not so much caught in the desire to make greater gain as by his solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the people to whom he had long ministered and for whom he had endured much physical suffering, and had poured out so many heart-wrung petitions; he also left his bush farm, went to the mines and resumed his trade of boiler-maker.

Caught in the grip of a greedy company, his Sundays, formerly held so sacred for religious work and holy meditation, were now wrested from him. The men must work on Sunday as on Saturday, or else lose their job.

As did his flock, so did the good man. He bowed his shoulders to the yoke, but not a penny of Sunday wages would he use for himself or his family. From his friends, the Tract Society, he bought tracts, Bibles, and other Christian literature.

After his day's work was done he would diligently visit among his fellow-workmen, and to them he gave tracts and Testaments. To the few—oh, so few! for the grip of mammon is crushing to spiritual aspirations—who would listen, the good man talked of the life that is to be lived in Jesus.

The miners multiplied, the people greatly increased, and he could not visit them all. To his faithful and godly helpmate he allotted certain sections to visit, to pray with and to enrich with gifts of good reading matter.

He went to the foreigners as well as to English-speaking people. He sought to place a New Testament in his native tongue in the house of each man. Frenchmen, Finlanders, Germans, Italians, and Poles learned to know him as a friend. He loved them all, prayed for all, and to all who would receive, he gave.

The steady labour, with no Sunday rest, tells on all men, good and bad. The physical man cannot stand it and is sure to break down sooner or later. After four years of this work, 'Father' Douse had to give up and was ordered away by the doctor.

Some time before his departure a school-house had been built, and to Mr. Douse's delight a missionary had established in it regular preaching services.

Near Toronto Mrs. Douse had friends, and there they went. In a quiet little house the old people settled with comfort. After a year's rest, with returning strength 'Father' Douse became

restless. He must again see his flock and see how they were doing. The 'North Country' was on his heart.

Visiting the authorities of the Upper Canada Bible and Tract Society, he secured a position as Colporteur. His delight at this appointment was unbounded. With the old enthusiasm he set about his new work. It was his old loved work in a new form.

He was welcomed by his friends, but he found that selling tracts, Bibles, and booklets was a very different thing from the privilege he formerly had of giving them away. Still he persisted, and extended his operations over a very large part of what is known as New Ontario. To lumber camps, mining settlements, supply centres, and railroad towns he went. He offered his Bibles and books, talked on personal salvation with any who would, prayed with such, and left his blessing upon all.

Where prosperity dwells and riches increase, that strange complex mode of life known as 'civilization' grows quickly. In a few years the little school-house was discarded for a much larger one and a church was built for divine worship. A settled pastor had also followed the visiting missionary. The people had well out-grown their miners' shacks, and many dwelt in houses of pretentious proportions and of modern appointments. So the new displaced the old. The 'day of small things' seemed a matter of the distant past.

For several years the Colporteur paid the North Country an annual visit. Then old age began to tell on him, as did the influence of such a life. Change of lodging, exposure to all weathers, and carrying heavy bags of books, test the health and strength of men in their prime, much more that of old men.

Two years intervened between his visits. But the old Colporteur faithfully and pluckily did his work. He did not feel out of harmony with the new, growing life. He rejoiced at the progress. But his declining strength and the protests from home rose between him and his beloved work. The family physician had joined in the protest, and had forbidden him to go again. But he had come—just once more—for a farewell visit.

Over the whole field he had gone. His heart was warmed as he met the members of his flock. They welcomed him to their fireside, brought their children to receive his blessing, and for them they bought his bright and helpful books. To those who were still too poor in faith and learning to appreciate good books, he persistently gave, and always with a blessing. A few faces he missed. They had gone 'sweeping through the gates,' quoting the prayers and blessings of the old Colporteur with their dying breath.

With full heart, rich in praises to God, and fearful of no man but the cashier of the Tract Society, the old Colporteur's face was now turned homeward. He was loath to go—how loath, God alone knows!

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One more call—and that upon the pastor, a young man, spirited, aggressive, cultured, flourishing a University degree. The old Colporteur was heartily welcomed by the young preacher as he entered the little study in the church.

After laying the old man's hat upon his desk, the pastor placed a chair before the fire and urged him to warm himself, as November winds were cold. Then the pastor asked about his health, his life, and his work.

At first the old man spoke slowly—it seemed cautiously. He was glad, though, to be asked about his work. He had come to speak of that. He had a great burden on his heart, and he wanted the Lord to roll it on the shoulders of a younger and, he trusted, a better man. A man of learning the preacher was; a man of eloquence, he had heard. But he almost feared such a man—feared him, while he respected him for his scholarship. He thought, like many another who, though wise on other points, has failed here and has misjudged his brethren, that a man of learning despises his more uneducated fellow-men, and is also lacking in faith. 'Not many wise men after the flesh are called,' is a passage of Scripture that has been most unfortunately used by some.

With great solicitude the old Colporteur wished to know for himself whether the young preacher was a man of faith and religious experience. Did he love his work and love his people? Did he love them with all their weaknesses, their ignorance, and their sins? His whole being was alert to find

out the spirit of the young preacher. He was open-hearted and generous, and wanted to be convinced that the young man rang true. After some conversation he seemed satisfied and rejoiced. Then he spoke freely of his work and of his hopes.

The hours passed swiftly. The dark November evening deepened into gloom. The Colporteur was urged to stay the night. No, he must catch the night-train. Turning abruptly to the young preacher, he said—

‘Will it do any harm to spend two minutes in prayer?’

‘Why, no. I shall be glad to have you pray with me.’

Upon that little study floor they knelt, and the old Colporteur poured out his heart in simple, earnest words to God. He was bearing a task, a mighty task, in his usual way—bravely, faithfully, pluckily. The whole of his past swept his vision: the people whom he had loved, visited, prayed for, suffered for, in bush and camp and mine, were present. Would God not bless this young man for the efficient care of his people? Never again would he see them on earth. In heaven they were to meet. But faithful must be the one who should lead, nurture, and sustain them. Many, oh, so many! were still without faith. God was great. His Spirit was equal to all demands made.

The young man was deeply impressed. His whole being was thrilled. No words can describe the feeling of humility, the hallowing sense of

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God's presence, he experienced while that old, holy Colporteur was, as it were, wrestling with God on his behalf.

The prayer ended. The old man secured his hat. The young preacher put on his hat and coat and would accompany the Colporteur to the station, though the visitor said it was not necessary. But the younger man persisted.

Outside the study door the Colporteur had left his two bags of books. As he picked them up, the young man protested, and, seizing them, he carried them down the street. The two men walked side by side in silence, their hearts too busy for words.

They had but fairly reached the station when in steamed the train, with its lights glaring sharply into the dark night.

Before stepping on the train, and as if suddenly roused out of a reverie, the old Colporteur put his two hands on the young man's arm, and said, in a whisper that sounded more like a heart-broken sob than a sigh—

'Never again shall I see them on earth. The Lord mightily bless you to them.'

The first sentence was meant for God alone, the second for the young man; but the preacher heard them both. Then, taking his bags, the old man entered the train. The next minute the grinding wheels started, and southward and homeward he sped. But it was homeward and heavenward for the old Colporteur, for he never left the train alive.

The young preacher watched the train out of sight with a new light in his eye. Then with a deeper, holier, and more terrible realization of the work that lay at his hand and on his heart, he turned to it with new consecration.

V

ROY NICHOLS, ELECTRICIAN

‘WELL done, Roy,’ said the manager of the telephone company to Roy Nichols. ‘You are to be congratulated on finishing your course so well. The prize-winner in the department of electricity! What are you going to do now?’

‘I haven’t decided yet,’ Roy replied, shaking hands with his friend and modestly accepting his congratulations.

‘Then you had better come with me, and I will find a job for you.’

‘Thank you,’ said Roy; and the next morning he began work with the telephone company.

Roy was a fine-looking young man, of medium height, cheery of disposition, and industrious. He was the son of a farmer who had a small farm and several sons. So Roy left the farm for his brothers, and sought work in the city. He had found employment in the electric light works, and became so interested in electricity that he took up night-school work. In this way he prepared himself for matriculation and for entering the

University School of Practical Science. When he was ready to enter, he had enough money saved up, with what his father could spare him, to put him through the course. His success on graduation has already been noted by the manager of the telephone company.

‘President Bohm wants the telephones in his mines fixed up,’ said the manager to Roy, about three months after his engagement with him. ‘Will you go and see what’s the matter, and what you can do for him?’

‘Certainly,’ replied Roy.

‘It’s in a rough district, and I do not suppose that there will be any Epworth League there,’ said the manager, suggestively.

‘If there’s a church, I shall join it,’ replied Roy, quietly.

‘That’ll be a step in the right direction,’ declared the manager, kindly. ‘You may leave for the mines as soon as you can.’

The following Monday Roy set out for the Bohm Mines. These were situated in the wilds of a newly opened country. He found that in the centre of the mining district there had sprung up a good-sized town. There were two large smelters, a refinery, and three mines inside the corporation, besides the company’s general offices and the machine, moulding, and repair shops. Railways connected the mines, smelters, and roast-beds. While Roy found much bustle and activity, the town presented a most desolate appearance. The sulphur smoke from the roast-beds had destroyed

all vegetable life, and there was no tree in town, not even a healthy blade of grass. The houses were hastily constructed, a very few painted, and all stained with the effects of the smoke and weather.

New mines were being constantly opened up, and Bohm was enjoying great prosperity. A telephone system had been introduced on the establishment of the general offices, but it had broken down. It was to repair this that Roy's services were required, and also to extend the system to new mines and other important centres. There was at least six months' work ahead of Roy, and as it was his first independent work he was full of enthusiasm to enter upon it.

True to his word, however, to his friend, his late employer, when he reached the town, Roy asked if there was a Protestant church in the place, and was directed to the weekly prayer-meeting on the evening of his arrival. At this prayer-meeting he found four middle-aged miners and three women, besides the young preacher.

This was not a very encouraging outlook. But they greeted the young stranger kindly.

'I would like a word with you,' said Roy to the young preacher, at the close of the service.

'With pleasure. I have my study in the corner over there, and I shall be glad to have you come in for a chat.'

'I would like to join the church,' said Roy when they were seated in the study, 'if I can meet your conditions.'

'Our church is here for just such men as you,

and we shall welcome you right heartily. The conditions of membership are few and straight. The first is to know Christ as your Saviour—for to know Him is life eternal; and, secondly, to take Him as your Example in the conduct of daily life. He is the way, the truth and the life, and His command to us is, "Follow Me!"

'I accept those conditions.'

'Then we shall welcome you into church membership. I hope that you will treat me as a brother in Christ and permit me to exercise the same affection towards you.'

Thus Roy became a member of the Church of Christ, and thus began an intimate friendship that meant not only much to both these young men, but also great good to the town.

The next day Roy went to work at the company's telephones. It was sorry work, for the instruments that they had were nearly ruined by misuse and the tinkering of ignorant mechanics. He, however, went over them faithfully, and gradually brought order and efficiency out of chaos.

During his work Roy had endeared himself to the pastor, the church-going people, and all other thoughtful people in the place. His brotherliness and freedom from all snobbery made him very popular with the workmen. Every Thursday night found him at prayer-meeting, and on Sunday he not only attended the preaching services, but also took charge of a class in the Sabbath school. He assisted the pastor in gathering a company of

thoughtful young people together and formed a Young People's Society, of which Roy made a most efficient president.

While Roy thus made himself popular with the church-going people, his courteous refusal to attend 'smokers,' 'wine-parties,' etc., or to give such to the clerks and other employees of the company, who considered themselves the 'superiors' of the company, won for himself many a cold shoulder and snub. His general popularity, with his kindness and wit, only the more angered the 'set,' who sneered at Christian people in general.

Roy's work proved eminently satisfactory to his employers, and the managers were generous enough to tell him so. But Roy was not permitted to sit in the telephone office and to reap quietly the fruits of his labours. He was barely finishing the work on his last 'phone when the president called him into his office.

'Sit down, Mr. Nichols,' he said kindly. 'I want to talk to you. You have worked wonders with our old 'phones, and thus saved us a great deal. We were told it could not be done; so we give you great credit.'

'Thank you,' said Roy, well pleased.

'We thank you,' said the president, a little brusquely. 'Now we have an offer from a telephone company to take over the whole plant and work it for us. Which will be cheaper for us—to run a separate plant of our own, or connect with them?'

'What is their offer?'

'There it is,' replied the president, showing Roy a sheet of estimates.

'I have done the heaviest work, and it will be comparatively easy to run this plant now. You could have a cheaper man than I, and run your plant as cheaply as this, but it would be risky. They have their experts, and it would be safer and cheaper on the whole to hand the plant over to them.'

'If we accept the telephone company's offer, our present engagement with you will then soon end.'

'Very well, sir.'

The president scrutinized Roy's face to see if there were any selfish pangs, but found none.

'Do you know anything about electric light plants?' asked the president, abruptly.

'Yes, sir,' said Roy; 'that is my special department.'

'Why are you in telephone work, then?'

'It is all electricity, and it was the first offer I had after graduation.'

'Have you had any practical experience with electric lights?'

'About three years.'

'Do you think that you could give me the estimates of putting in an electric plant here?'

'I think so.'

'Then let me have your estimates in three days. If things are satisfactory,' said the president, as Roy rose to leave, 'we may yet have the pleasure of your service in our company.'

Roy plunged into his new task. He had not gone over the company's property for nothing, and in due time he presented his estimates to the president.

The managers had been contemplating putting in an electric plant for some time. They had written to one of the best companies on the subject, and had secured their estimates. The president, with some of the directors, examined the two documents, and were surprised at the similarity of their main estimates. The chief differences were in details, and they readily saw that Roy suggested economy in things unnecessary for such a town. In all this the president was eminently pleased, and said that they ought to appoint Roy as their electrician.

'Keep him at the 'phones until we get the plant in, and then we'll see,' said the directors.

The electric plant was ordered, and after two months' work was declared in running order.

During that time the electric company had one of their experts, J. C. Smith, superintending the installation. Smith was a good mechanic, but also considered himself a clever diplomat and a man of the world. He quickly ingratiated himself with the 'set,' and with him the clerks held high carnival. Many were the sneers and innuendoes thrown out about the trickery and hypocrisy of the churchy, goody-goody men. These shafts all pointed one way; but, in the presence of Roy, this man was most correct and even full of compliments about Roy's work.

During the work the president took Roy around the electric plant to elicit any suggestions of improvement. This evident favour of the president for the man belittled over the wine-cups, and his criticisms of Smith's work, made Smith very angry, but he was too politic to show his displeasure. Then he saw that the position of electrician was a good situation, and he wanted it for a cousin of his, whom he had at that time working with him.

From the conversation he overheard between Roy and the president and the gossip of the 'set,' Smith soon realized that Roy was a dangerous rival of his *protégé*. So he redoubled his efforts to win the favour of the company's people. He soon found out, however, that the clerks were not the president and directors. Then Smith found a way of letting the directors hear the sneers and innuendoes about Roy, and in such a way as to give them the best appearance of truth.

These were days of deep bitterness to Roy, but he always found sympathy and help in the little study in the basement of the church. There was one who always sympathized with and never doubted him. Roy had many other true friends. But at such times of trial we do not always see them through the mists and clouds that spring up around us. Still the anchor held him, and enabled him to be true and sweet, faithful and courteous.

When Smith began to realize that, in spite of all his efforts, Roy was the choice of the directors, he prepared to deal his last and master stroke.

The president was called away for a couple of weeks. Smith completed his task and prepared to hand the plant over to the mining company. In doing so he said that he could not guarantee the successful working of the plant unless they appointed one specially accustomed to their machines, coupling with this statement the name of his cousin.

Some of the directors, not at all prejudiced in Roy's favour, thought Smith reasonable, and the president not being there to defend his ability to handle those very machines, it was decided to appoint Smith's cousin as chief electrician and to ask Roy to accept a subordinate position.

Smith was abundantly delighted, and was not satisfied with the meagre facilities of Bohm to treat his friends. So the 'set' drove five miles away to a town where there was a real hotel, and amidst many toasts he shouted the praises of its directors. One of the directors met Roy and asked him to accept the subordinate position.

'Under whom?' asked Roy.

'Rupert Smith has been sent by the electric company, and we have retained him as our electrician.'

'Then I cannot serve you,' replied Roy.

'Why?'

'It is not for me to say.'

'Then your engagement with our company ends.'

'At a week's notice, sir.'

The director bowed, and Roy passed on.

The same train that brought the president back to Bohm took Roy away. The two capable, well-

dressed men just saw each other and bowed ere the train whirled away. But Roy had time to see the look of pained surprise that came into the president's face.

The president, however, had to accept the decision of the directors, but in his conversation with the one who had discharged Roy, he said—

‘I do not wonder he would not serve under that fellow. Nichols has more knowledge stored up in the corner of his mind than that fellow has in his whole body.’

‘But Smith has had experience with those machines.’

‘Nichols has had three years with the same kind, and I'll guarantee that inside of three months you'll wish that you had him back here.’

When Roy left Bohm he visited several of the mining centres, but did not find the special kind of work he wanted. Then he went back to the city and was gladly taken again into employment by the electric light people with whom he had first worked. He found many old friends, and was very happy and thankful that he had escaped from the land of desolation and intrigue.

His letters to his pastor bore this message, but his pastor told him that he felt as if he had been robbed of his right hand, and it was in such places as a mining town that Roy's ability, righteousness, and integrity were most truly appreciated. The persecution only emphasized them. It was the bright light of such conduct that exposed the darkness of the tricky and the sinful.

Smith left the day after his cousin's appointment, but was soon called back, for something had gone wrong. It was so trifling that the elder man had a great deal of difficulty in explaining the trouble to his own company, who were called upon to pay the travelling expenses.

Within a month young Smith's incapacity was evident to all the skilled mechanics of the place.

'What can we do about it?' asked the directors.

'Call Nichols back,' suggested the president.

The directors shrugged their shoulders.

The president saw their actions and smiled.

'You'll ask me to telegraph for him next month,' he said.

And it was as the president had prophesied.

During the next month the lights went out several times and left the directors themselves in darkness. They instructed the president to communicate with Roy.

Roy thanked the president for his kind offer, but said that he had secured a good situation with his old employers, and that he was quite satisfied.

In a week Roy received a telegram asking on what terms he would return. He took the letter and telegram to his superintendent, and on his advice wrote his reply. He fully expected to be left where he was, because the salary he now asked was so much higher than that first mentioned by the president for the situation. But to Roy's surprise he received in three days another telegram, saying: 'Terms accepted. Come at once.'

In another week, to the great joy of many, Roy

was again in Bohm, established as its electrician; and within another week all the directors were surprised at the light that could be given by such quiet, smooth-running machines.

In congratulating him on coming back, the director who had dismissed him said, as he saw him working around his electric dynamos—

‘I perceive you are an artist as well as a mechanic.’

‘I know my work, and I like to do it well,’ Roy replied quietly.

‘And therein is success,’ declared the director, now thoroughly convinced that the president was a better judge of men than he.

VI

THE CHURCH BOSS

‘**W**HAT a miserable, miserable sermon!’
‘That’s what I have just been saying,’ groaned the young preacher from the chair by his study fire, into which he seemed to have collapsed rather than to be merely resting.

‘I thought so,’ said the visitor, cheerfully; ‘and I thought that I would come in and help you say it good and strong.’

‘May God have mercy!’ groaned the preacher again.

‘Well may you pray that,’ said the other, in his happiest voice.

‘You dry up,’ said the victim, in a most unministerial manner. ‘If it were not Sunday I would punch you.’

‘I’m glad it’s Sunday, for I think that you are a bit the stronger man,’ was the bright reply.

‘You are a nice man to intrude upon another man’s quiet.’

‘“Quiet!” ahem! and do you call your state of mind, or rather the state of mind I found you in,

"quiet"? I need not remind you that you said that my presence here would never be an intrusion.'

'Oh, I beg your pardon for my hasty word,' pleaded the preacher.

'Cut that all out,' said the other; and he dropped into a serious tone. 'Hewitt, let me tell you that that was one of the most telling addresses that you have given here. It is a message that will ring in the hearts of scores of men when plenty of your fancy exploits are clean forgotten. I saw that it had cost you a lot of nervous energy to deliver it. You felt keenly what you said, and that's what made your hearers feel it. Then you have had a hard week, and I know it. When I saw you grab your hat and leave, I also knew what your humpty-dumpty spirit was up to, and so I hastened to pull you out of the Slough of Despond. Punch me if you dare, and I'll get Big John, the prayer-leader, to shake you until your toes rattle in your boots.'

Mr. Hewitt's visitor was a bright young man, a clerk in the company, about his own age. He had not been long in that mining town before he had struck up a warm friendship for the struggling young missionary. They were kindred spirits in many things, especially in things spiritual. Both of them were consecrated sons of God, and were ready to endure hardness for Christ's sake. They had already fought battles side by side for God, and had learned to appreciate the mettle that was in the other, and the clerk was given the freedom of the preacher's bachelor quarters. When not at his work Rowland Thomas was often in the

preacher's den, reading devotional books, praying or planning for the good of the town. But Thomas's easy, cheerful, compelling manner had a touch of affected bossiness that won for him the sobriquet, at least among the church people, of 'the church boss.' It sat as lightly upon his cheerful nature as many of the outbursts of the more hasty-tempered minister or church officials. These he laughed off and had his own way, at least in clearing the air of the clouds of unfortunate dust that such people raise.

Hearing that there was trouble in the choir, he sauntered, on the next Friday night, into the church during choir practice. A dispute was at its height. Jealousy, spite, and temper were at arms with favouritism, or supposed favouritism.

'Hello,' said Thomas, 'I thought that they practise singing at choir practice, not elocution. I thought that I would come in to have my voice tested. Once upon a time a girl told me that I could sing, but I thought it was flattery. But I started a hymn at prayer-meeting the other night. The people caught the tune all right, and so my singing stock has soared. I thought the choir leader should have a chance at it. But as to elocution—well, I really know something about that.'

And he mimicked the hasty tones of spite and jealousy, making them so extravagantly ridiculous that all the choir people were laughing heartily, even the parties imitated. Then he grew suddenly sad. To think that people, blessed of God

with a gift that could lift souls out of the common things of life by Christian song, should tolerate such unkind feelings in their hearts! He cried shame on them. Many hearts were rebuked, but in such a kindly way that none dare speak again the unkind word and none could take offence. When he saw that the air was clear again, he mockingly pleaded for the privilege of singing the chief solo the next Sunday, and was sure that he, and he alone, would be the attractive force in the choir, the leader's favourite, the Joseph among the brethren, the David among the singers of Israel! He cleared his throat, made an effort to sing, and was promptly and unanimously invited to join the choir.

‘Not one dissenting voice?’ he exclaimed.

‘Not one,’ said the leader, laughingly.

‘Woe be unto you,’ said he, seizing his hat, ‘when all men speak well of you,’ and he made for the door. That was the end of the trouble in the choir for many a day. The strangest thing about that visit was that the most severely reprimanded members thanked him for his visit to the choir practice, and thought that the choir would be vastly better if more of the church members would take an interest in their work. Others wondered why he came.

A man like Thomas soon finds his way to the official board of the church. It was at the meetings of this board that his sunny ways had their severest trials. That men called to deal with the things of God should or could be meaner, narrower, and

more stupid in the ways of church business than the commonest men are about earthly things, was a surprise to him. If in any place, it was here that he looked for glowing optimism, large outlook, generosity, and self-sacrifice. Often he felt himself humiliated and wished to fling himself out of such a company, but when he saw the patient look upon Hewitt's face, he felt that to desert him would be criminal. So he held to his post. His bright speeches were repulsed, time and time again. The older men endeavoured fairly to crush him. He smiled on, hoped on, and tried to find some way to penetrate the hardness of their hearts.

An upheaval came one night. Thomas had been faithful to his secular duties, and the company had steadily advanced his wages. With every advance he had increased his givings to the church. That night the treasurer whispered that Thomas had been the best contributor to the church funds during the last quarter. The fat was in the fire. Several men came to their feet to defend the amounts they gave, and thought that it was enough for them, and—this was where the shoe pinched—more than any one else should give.

There were several speeches to a like effect. One would think that Thomas wished to usurp the throne because he had increased his givings to a point ahead of the others. Thomas had endeavoured to hear as little as possible. He thought the whole discussion irreverent. But the treasurer asked him pointedly what he had to say.

'I have nothing to say,' he said, his cheerful

smile taking its habitual place, with a line or two of pain and sadness holding ground. 'I have nothing to say except that what I give is a matter between myself and God. As He gives me the means, I shall increase my givings to promote His cause. In the business world, when we want our business to grow, we increase the capital, when we want more ore we find new mines and pour in more capital and men. So in God's work. God wants us to enlarge, and as He gives us the means to do so we ought to go ahead. No personal business or family consideration should come before God's work. Is that not His teaching with an accompanying promise? "Seek ye *first*" (is that not it?) "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." I do not know why you called me to my feet. I am humbly trying to be true to God with my money as with my prayers. Brethren, pray for me that I may do so.'

There was no sarcasm, levity, or mimicry here. He felt that these were hardly weapons to use on such an occasion, if he ever thought of them at all. The plain statement of his simple faith and desire to be faithful was a heavier sword upon the hearts present, and his straight, honest plea for prayer that he might be faithful in the giving of his money as in prayer caused many a heart to say: 'And grant this to me also, Lord.'

There was a strange silence. The treasurer was the first to recover himself. He saw it was an opportune moment for his plea.

‘This is the time of year, brethren,’ he said quietly, ‘for us to have our people make or renew their promises of weekly offerings. Shall we do it next Sunday?’

‘I’ll double mine,’ said one of the oldest members present, straightening himself up, for he had been leaning forward with his head almost touching his knees. Tears glistened in his eyes. ‘I too want to be a faithful steward.’

‘Make mine seventy-five cents a Sunday,’ said another.

‘Good!’ exclaimed the treasurer. He was so surprised at the speech of the other speaker that he had had nothing to say, but now he spoke. ‘That is a fifty per cent. increase.’

Two of the richest members seized their hats and flung themselves haughtily out. Mr. Hewitt’s head dropped. He was sure that these men went out to make trouble, but Thomas felt as if a load had been removed.

‘Praise the Lord!’ he shouted; ‘that is glorious. The Lord will take care of the wheat, but the chaff shall be blown away.’

The others present caught the spirit of the two who had already subscribed and made proportionate increases. The meeting closed with the Doxology, and was the happiest that they had ever had. With joyful hearts the minister and treasurer faced the congregation the next Sunday and told the people what had taken place in the business meeting—minus the leaving of the malcontents, who were not present at church that morning.

The happy spirit of loyalty to God and faithful stewardship of their means caught the people and they heartily and cheerfully responded. They had never had such a meeting. The promise of Malachi seemed to be fulfilled. They were a happy people, and the members, from being always in financial trouble and seeking rescue by questionable means of money-getting, saw themselves free of these things, God-honouring, self-respecting, and able to send help to other churches in need.

In trying to find out who started this movement, one of the members came to the treasurer—

‘Why, who else,’ said he, ‘but the boss? You can’t help liking him and tumbling to his idea sooner or later.’

VII

THE IDIOT'S WELL

HUNGRY and tired out with his day's tramping, John Roland, a mining prospector, came up to a clearing with its little log cabin, hid away amidst the rocks of Algoma.

On knocking at the door he was met by Jim Brooks, a sturdy lad of sixteen years, though his manners and actions made him appear much older.

'Can you give me any supper?' asked Roland.

For answer the boy looked back to his mother, who was sitting at the end of the table—a heavy, home-made table, without a cloth upon it. The mother quietly arose and came to the door.

'Such as we have you are quite welcome to,' said she.

'Thank you, ma'am,' said Roland, entering. Then swinging off his bag, with his pick and shovel, he placed them in the corner.

While Roland was washing himself, the mother quickly went to the cupboard, got out an extra plate and spoon and a pot of raspberry jam. The sight of the last article made the children's eyes sparkle.

Having finished his toilet Roland was bidden to take the chair set apart for him. To his right there was apparently a young man; Fred, his mother called him. Fred's words were thick and his actions were so wild that Roland at first wished that he had been placed in safer quarters. But as he noticed that the other members of the family paid no attention to the idiot's actions and little to his words, he also adopted, as well as he could, the same policy. Fred, however, did his best to interest the visitor with dramatic accounts of his most wonderful exploits. Next to Fred sat a sturdy lad of six or seven, at whose side sat Jim. Jim was evidently the head of the household. With quiet dignity and eye upon his mother, he seemed to have a paternal interest in all the rest. At Roland's left sat little Hattie, a bright three-year-old girl.

Roland's heart was smitten when he noticed what was on the table to eat. In the centre there was a large brown bowl of what was called 'soup.' To him it seemed little better than greasy water with a few chips of pork floating in it. The bread was very dark—ground whole-wheat flour. This bread, though dark, was sweet, and the jam delicious, but Roland felt that every eye around the table saw every mouthful that he ate. He tried to talk pleasantly at the table, but he did not find converse successful.

'I dig big well,' said Fred, with such involuntary and dramatic actions that Roland thought that he was going to knock him down. 'With my wooden

shovel, too. Lift big stones, me do,' he added, with eyes that enlarged as if trying to indicate the size of the stones.

'We'll examine the well after tea,' said Roland, in a conciliatory way.

Fred was greatly pleased at this. He swung his hands up and down and forgot to eat until Jim quietly told him to finish his supper.

When Roland got Jim aside after tea he endeavoured to find out something of the family history.

'Look here, my boy,' he said kindly, 'where's your father?'

'Dunno,' replied Jim, with a downward look.

'Skinned out and left you in this hole to dig for yourselves?'

Jim did not answer, but Roland saw enough in the boy's actions to convince him that his estimate of the father was right.

'Been here long?' asked Roland.

'About six years.'

'Where did you come from?'

'Muskoka.'

'Any better there than here?'

'Some, but not much, except pa was with us then.'

'And now he has dug out and left your ma and you to look after these 'uns. You can't get much out of these rocks at farmin'.'

'Oh, well,' said Jim, straightening himself up, 'we've managed so far.'

'Well said, my lad; but there's a difference

between livin' and skimmin' along just above starvation. I can see it. Your ma wouldn't tell me that your pa had run away and left her—no, not if it was to save her life. She's the pure quill and so are you. I can just see you both with your hoes a-grubbing up the soil for taters, plantin' of 'em, and a-diggin' of 'em, and then a-totin' of 'em to the village. And you have a medder, have you?' added Roland, for Jim had interjected some information. 'And some cows and some pigs! Well, it was kind of the pa to leave you that much.'

Roland's indignation hardly knew bounds.

'But pa went away to get us some money. He said he knew where he could earn some,' explained Jim, sturdily defending his father.

'He did, eh!' remarked Roland sceptically. 'Wouldn't like to surprise you, Jim, but you and your cracked brother answers a description we'se heard from Bill Brooks in Ted Morden's bar-room.'

'That's my pa's name,' said Jim.

'Thought so.'

'Where's he now?' asked Jim.

'Minin' and drinkin',' was the sententious reply. 'Say, Jim,' he said, changing the subject of their conversation, 'did you ever try anything to help Fred?'

'When we sold our calf this spring, ma had a doctor come and examine him.'

'Yes, I understand. It was food or Fred, and Fred won. What did the doctor say?'

'Said he thought he could be cured if he had proper medical treatment.'

'Loneliness and hard fare kept him silly and your ma down.'

'Did you hear him?' asked Jim, in a manner that said, Why, if you know it all, why do you ask me?

'No, no, Jim; go on. I only guessed it from what I've seen.'

'There ain't no more to tell. Ma and I are workin' hard, and, when we can, we'll save up and get Fred cured.'

'Here's a bit of paper to help you.'

'No,' said Jim, 'that's not right. The supper wasn't worth ten dollars, and ma can't change the bill.'

'I wasn't talkin' about the supper,' said Roland. 'That's to help to cure Fred.'

Roland then entered the house to secure his tools, but he found that Fred had taken possession of them. When the young fellow saw Roland, he jumped up and came with demonstrations as though he would hug him.

'Well—you see my well?' he spluttered.

'No, I didn't see your well,' said Roland, rather roughly.

Fred was greatly disappointed, and staggered back as if he had been hit.

'You promised to see his well,' said Mrs. Brooks, quietly.

Roland saw his mistake in so speaking to the unfortunate one, and he thanked the mother in his heart for her bravery and her self-control.

'So I did, Fred,' he said in a different tone of voice, 'so I did. Let's go and see it now.'

The mother saw the change in Roland's manner, and was satisfied, but she now interposed.

'It is too late to go now,' she said. 'You had better stay with us to-night, friend, for it is a long distance to any neighbour. Then you can go and see Fred's well in the morning ere you go on your journey.'

With many expressions of thanks for her courtesy, Roland stayed with them.

Early the next morning Fred was up and ready for the promised visit. At last some one had come along, and he was going to show them his 'well.' Roland and Jim were also up early, and planned to see the well before breakfast, so that Roland could get an early start for the place he had in mind to explore. As they journeyed along, Fred jumped around the other two in his delight.

In his weariness and then his sympathy for the family, the prospector had nearly forgotten his business; but now his mineralogical instincts and knowledge were keenly aroused, and he saw things that interested him greatly. Green stones lay all about, and the soil was of a rusty hue. These, to him, were wonderful indications. But the climax was reached when he looked into the idiot's well. He quickly jumped into it, and carefully examined the stones he found at the bottom.

'How much farther do you think water is?' asked Jim.

Roland didn't seem to understand the question.

'There's no water here, Jim,' he said. 'But, Jim, my lad, have you ever had any other man out to see this place?'

'No. We haven't seen a man on this place for months, and the last one wanted to buy some cattle.'

Roland put several of the stones into his pocket, and then, without saying anything to the boys, turned in an abstracted way for the road.

'You'll be wanting some breakfast,' said Jim, 'and your tools.'

'I'll be back to see you soon,' he shouted to Jim, while Fred looked first into his well and then at the man who was running rather than walking away.

True to his word, Mr. Roland came back again, but it was not until the next day, and then he was driven by a tall, handsome gentleman in a fine buggy with a team of beautiful horses.

'Mr. Collins—Mrs. Brooks,' said Roland, introducing the stranger. 'I've brought him out to see Fred's well on the hillside.'

'Well, that's not much to see,' said the mother, apologetically, but she was pleased at the interest of these men in the work, as she thought, of her unfortunate son.

'Well, Roland thinks that there is a good deal to see, Mrs. Brooks, and he wouldn't be satisfied until I saw it. So I am here.'

'Jim is away in the potato patch,' said Mrs. Brooks, 'and I was just on my way to help him dig the potatoes. Harry is too small to show you over, and Fred is working at the well now. I'd better call Jim.'

'Oh, you needn't call Jim,' said Roland. 'I can show Mr. Collins the place.' Then he added in a kind of whisper, 'You had better stay here, Mrs. Brooks, and—and prepare a cup of tea for Mr. Collins when he comes back.'

That was the second excuse Roland thought of to detain her.

When the men reached the hillside, they saw poor Fred with a wooden shovel and pole working away at his 'well,' which was nothing but an irregular hole in the ground about five feet deep. At the sight of Mr. Roland, Fred dropped his tools, sprang out of the well, and ran to greet him. Roland made a few hurried explanations to Mr. Collins, but that gentleman preferred at first to keep away from Fred. Both men, however, were soon too much absorbed in studying the stones and the formation of the land and rocks to pay any attention to the idiot, and Fred felt himself neglected, and walked around as dumbly and inanely as a dog.

'The thing is rich,' he heard Mr. Collins say, 'rich in copper and in nickel too. I wonder how far the indications go?'

Roland went here and there. With his pick and shovel he dug a little hole in several places, and with every stroke of his pick was better pleased with his find.

When the men returned to the house, Mr. Collins wanted to talk outside, but Roland bade him enter.

'Mrs. Brooks,' said Mr. Collins, going straight

into the business before him, 'Roland insists that we should open our mind to you. We believe that there is good ore in your place. Fred's well has tapped the side of it. We should like to buy your farm.'

'It isn't worth much,' said the good woman, deprecatingly.

'Not much as a farm, perhaps,' replied Mr. Collins, 'but the ore indications are rich. I should like to buy the farm outright, and I'll give you five thousand dollars cash.'

'Tell her the other offer,' said Roland.

'There is another method of payment that I should agree to, and that is to pay you three thousand dollars cash, and leave you a quarter interest in the mine, while I pay all the cost of development.'

Mrs. Brooks did not answer, and the business man grew a little impatient. Roland noticed that the woman was perplexed. The figures offered had dazzled her.

'You like the second way best. Don't you?' said he, trying to relieve the situation.

'I must see Jim,' she said almost desperately.

'That's all right,' said Roland. 'You get Mr. Collins a cup of tea while I call Jim.'

'Why, certainly,' said the good woman as she sprang to her feet, her housewifely instincts coming to her relief. 'I have the tea ready for you both.'

'Mr. Collins, please tell Jim what you told me,' said Mrs. Brooks, when Roland and Jim came in.

So Mr. Collins repeated to Jim the two offers

he had made to his mother for the place. When he was through, Jim thought a moment, while Mr. Collins sipped his tea and studied the boy.

'How much did the doctor say would place Fred in that home where he'd have a chance to get cured?' asked Jim, turning to his mother.

'Not so much to get in if he had a chance; but it would cost a hundred dollars or more a year to keep him there. Then he might have to stay four or five years before he would be completely restored.'

'Five years,' meditated Jim, 'that's five hundred dollars for Fred.' Then turning rather stiffly to Mr. Collins, Jim asked—

'How much does a house cost in the village?'

'Oh, you can get a very nice one for a thousand dollars,' said Mr. Collins, his interest in both mother and son deepening.

'There's five hundred for Fred and a thousand for a house. How much could we set up a little store for?' asked Jim.

'Five hundred or a thousand,' suggested Roland, but Mr. Collins smiled.

'Look here, my boy,' said Mr. Collins very kindly and confidentially, 'if you want to go into a store, come with me. I've got a good hardware store, but I haven't got a boy like you.'

'But I want the store for mother to keep,' said Jim. 'I want to go some more to school, if I can figure it for mother.'

'I think you have figured it for your mother,' said Mr. Collins. 'You put aside a hundred

dollars now for your brother. The rest will come for him when it is needed. Then a thousand for your house. Leave a few hundred dollars in the bank to come and go, and I'll help you to invest the rest at good interest. With the interest from your money and what you can earn in the store, you will get along very nicely. Then we expect the mine to be paying us handsomely soon.'

In the early part of the conversation Mrs. Brooks had drawn her chair up beside her boy, who stood all the time facing Mr. Collins. As she now saw the end of her years and years of hard toil on the bush farms in hard out-of-the-way and rocky districts, she let her head sink down to her arm that rested on the table, and she wept. Jim heard a sob, and turning, saw his mother. He had felt with her too often not to know her feelings, and as a lump sprang into his throat, he seemed instinctively to have read her heart. Slipping his arm around his mother as if to soothe her, he said, with a bow to Mr. Collins—

'This is all very kind of you, sir. Many thanks.'

'Not at all, my boy,' said Mr. Collins, rising and reaching for his hat. 'No thanks are needed. I shall be glad to help you, my noble little fellow, in any way that I can. I have heard something of you through Roland. But in this transaction it is to be no thanks. Business is business, and Roland and I intend to make our venture pay.'

So Jim closed the bargain. When he returned to town Mr. Collins sent out a large box of provisions and made little Harry and Hattie Brooks

open their eyes and wonder if the heavens had suddenly opened to let so many good things appear at once.

Jim paid an early visit to Mr. Collins, and, with the assistance of Roland, he chose a comfortable house, paid for it and put some new furniture into it. Then the next day he proudly ushered his mother, brother, and little sister into their new home.

Jim and the doctor accompanied Fred to the Household Asylum, where, under modern psychological treatment, Dr. Kuke prophesied almost complete restoration of the young man.

Then, with free heart, Jim plunged into school. He had had a few winter sessions, and had been helped by his mother, but he found it hard work at first to compete with the village boys. Still his thirst for learning made him overcome every obstacle and put up with many a rebuff. His industry in the store was also assiduous, and Mr. Collins felt prouder of his *protégé* every day. The mine also had turned out better than his highest dreams. A large mining company offered him fifty thousand dollars for it and he wisely closed the bargain. This gave Jim some thousands of dollars more to invest.

The only unpleasantness that the family met was the return of Jim's father, drunken and surly. He had got wind of the good fortune of the family, and now came back to share it. He first roughly claimed it as his right, but Jim told him that he had had nothing to do with it. He had deserted

his wife and children, and had not seen them or done anything to help them for over three years. He had not even seen his youngest child. And Jim drove his father from the door.

'That's right,' said Roland, when he heard of it. 'The old scoundrel is not worthy of his family. But see that your mother don't cave in, my boy.'

But Mrs. Brooks refused to have anything to do with her husband. He tried several tactics. He tried force, and she called in a constable. He came again and begged for money. She said that it belonged to Jim, and that he must ask Jim for it. He then pled that he was her lonely husband, and asked her to remember that and take him in.

'When you quit drinking, William, and are worthy, there's a warm welcome awaiting you. I cannot promise you one before.'

With a curse Brooks turned away. But the sweet smile on his wife's face and her kind words impressed him. He could not get them out of his memory. He went to the Company that had bought 'The Idiot's Well Mine,' as it was now popularly called, and secured employment. He left off drinking, and attended such religious services as were held at the mine.

About three months after his father's last visit, Jim was sent on a Saturday to the mine with some hardware. He saw his father, and was so much impressed with his change of manner and his industry that he invited him home for Christmas, which was less than a fortnight distant. And Mr. Brooks accepted his son's invitation, and came.

It was a happy reunion. They were all there except Fred, but the news that he was progressing favourably at the Home made all glad on his account. Mrs. Brooks and the little ones were simply charmed with the new husband and father. Jim was so impressed with the change in his father that he wanted to transfer the house and all the money matters over to him.

‘No, no, Jim,’ said the father, as he danced Hattie up from his knee to clear his throat; ‘no, Jim, you are in the right and doing it right. I’m not safe yet, but I shall, some day, by God’s grace, be worthy of you, my noble boy, and of your blessed mother. Won’t we, Hattie?’

And he jumped to his feet, tossed his little girl to the ceiling, and, catching her, hugged her tightly to his breast.

‘Papa, oo’s been cwyin’,’ said the little one, when she recovered her breath.

VIII

EASTER LILIES AND SULPHUR SMOKE¹

‘**W**HAT is Easter without flowers!’ exclaimed the Rev. Maurice Stewart. ‘Resurrection morn to be celebrated, and no Easter lilies!’

Pastor Stewart was stationed in the mining town of Greenstone—a town that had no flowers in it. They were all destroyed by the sulphur smoke. Not a daisy, buttercup, or dandelion grew by the roadside. The smoke even entered the houses, and with its insatiable appetite for green things had, in spite of unremitting care, devoured the house-plants. The trees seemed to have been eaten down to the roots, only rude stumps and dried roots were now to be seen. The grass had long since bade farewell to the sulphur-infested place.

¹ There are a few mining towns in newer Canada where the raw ore, especially nickel and copper, is roasted in the open. As found, these ores contain sulphur and arsenic, inimical properties which must be burned out ere the ore is of commercial value. The fumes, popularly called ‘sulphur smoke,’ from these open-air roast-beds are very destructive to vegetable life, and it is only a matter of a short time when a place becomes denuded of all its trees, flowers, and grass.

Spring rains had turned every atom of earth into mud, but brought no trailing arbutus or violets. The summer sun had dried the mud kiln-dry, and the high winds, unhindered by trees, swept down the hillsides, through the valleys and over the plains, beating the arid earth to powder and rolling it over the land in great dust-clouds that rivalled the sulphur smoke in its density, its unpleasantness, and its ability to penetrate human frames and habitations.

In his mind Pastor Stewart saw other towns with their luxurious grasses and nicely shaven lawns that kept the dust in its place, and wondered why he had never before stopped to thank God just for the grass. The autumn came, but Greenstone had no apple trees, not even a sumach bush, with leaves to be washed in gold or decked with enchanting crimson. The cold winter brought up another phalanx of the enemies of the flowers. But winter, except its transient aftermaths, had passed, the day of the singing-bird had come. Easter was again near at hand.

'I must see some flowers. My soul is thirsty for them,' said the pastor, rising to his feet from his study chair. Then with a sudden gripping of his hand, he declared: 'And we shall have them.'

Seating himself again at his table he wrote a note hastily and enclosed it in an envelope. Then putting on his hat he walked down the hill to the post-office. Strolling across the bridge, he called upon Mrs. Shaver, his 'Mother Confessor,' as he facetiously styled her, a sweet little woman from

old England who had taken a motherly interest in her young pastor.

'Mrs. Shaver, I have determined to have some flowers for Easter,' he said a little bluntly and with a naughty boy's defiance after a wrong deed.

'Good!' replied the little woman, to the young man's great relief. 'I am almost sick to see a flower. I have tried almost everything. My geraniums lasted the longest; but, you remember, just before Christmas I woke up one morning and found the house surrounded with smoke. Some had got in, and my plants were yellow. I cried and I did all that I could to restore them, but it was no use. I wanted Bob to take me right out of this horrid place. What's a home without a flower?'

Tears sprang into her eyes at the remembrance of her lost flowers.

'And what's Easter without lilies?'

'That's so. Here's Spring. Every other place must be green and every hillside nook purple with violets. Why, I'd be glad to see a dandelion or an ox-eyed daisy, and I remember how my father hated them and fought them in lawn and roadside!'

Brushing away her tears, she laughed as she thought of the old gentleman's hatred, and his persistent efforts to root out those little plants.

'Just look at this, will you?' she exclaimed. Jumping up she led the minister to a window-box, which was full of stems and leaves recently turned yellow, some even shrivelled and dry.

'There,' said she, 'I planted some buttercup seeds in this end and some foxglove in that. They

came up and were doing bravely. Now look at them!’

And the tear-drops again sprang into her eyes.

The seeds had taken root, and had sent out some good shoots and leaves. The foxglove stems were up several inches, but now they hung their heads and were of a sickly yellow hue.

‘That’s my tenth experiment,’ she said sadly. ‘I do not know what to try next. That wretched sulphur smoke kills everything.’

‘Yes,’ said the young moralist; ‘like greed and selfishness, it kills all that is good and beautiful. But Easter is coming, and we are going to have some flowers.’

‘Where are you going to get them? There is not a house in town that has a flower in it.’

‘Then I’ll import them.’

‘Where from?’

‘From the city. I have ordered a supply for Easter.’

‘You have *ordered* flowers—from the *city*?’ said the little woman, trying to comprehend the surprising statement.

‘Yes,’ said the young preacher, quickly; ‘you know that orders must be in early, or we shall not be able to get a flower at all. I fear that even now my order is late.’

‘But flowers at Easter are expensive, and who’ll pay for them?’

‘The one who orders generally pays, doesn’t he?’

‘You’ll do nothing of the kind,’ said Mrs. Shaver, impulsively.

'I'll not ask the church trustees for a cent.'

'How many did you order?'

'Well, we have a good big church. It will seat four hundred people. So I thought it would take a hundred carnations and half a dozen lilies to brighten it up.'

'You naughty man!'

'I may be, but I can save it some other way, and it will do good. I do believe that some souls will respond to flowers who would never be touched by a sermon. Then we have so many foreigners, you know, who cannot understand English—the Finlanders, the French, and the Italians. They can appreciate flowers.'

'There are others besides foreigners. There's Tom Tudhope. I believe that flowers might bring him. Poor Tom! What a transformation there is in that man! One would hardly think that such a change could take place in any person. We lived beside him for a couple of years in Frontenac before we came up here. He was a great worker both in the church and out of it. He was the Superintendent of the Sunday School, and was an active, useful citizen. In his home he was the centre of life and brightness, and such a home as he had, with its beautifully kept lawn, its arbours, and such flower-beds! And he used to be so tidy and clean about his person. Down east, everybody loved and respected him.'

'Then there has indeed been a great change in the outer and inner man.'

'Yes, he's now rough and unkempt, hard and

selfish. He came up here to make money. At first he was going to return to Frontenac after he had "made his pile," but now he has sacrificed about everything for money. Soon after he came here he began working Sundays. The grasping spirit then grew rapidly. He took a big house, filled it with boarders, and made his wife look after it. He has nearly worked the life out of the dear little woman, and such a pretty, happy woman she used to be. He has taken his boys from school and sent them to the gloomy mines or into the dirty rockhouses. His one cry for years has been, "Money, money, money." I don't believe the fellow has been inside of a church for five years. But he still loves flowers. I believe that he has been fighting the sulphur smoke, and has succeeded in keeping a cactus alive.'

'Then there is hope for him. You tell him of the flowers, and perhaps we shall see him again in church. But Mr. Tudhope is only a sample of what greed has done to scores, if not hundreds, in this very town.'

'What are you thinking of doing with the flowers after Sunday?'

'Well, let me see. I really haven't thought that far ahead. I'll send some to the sick, and I think I'll give the rest to the ladies of my congregation.'

'You are too big-hearted for your pocket. You'll do nothing of the kind. You go back to your study, and I'll be up there this afternoon at three o'clock.'

At a quarter to three ladies of the congregation

began coming into the pastor's study. There was a shyness and a gentleness in the manner of all that was noticeably different from the usual loud good-fellowship, common amongst them.

'I haven't seen an Easter lily for three years,' said Mrs. Morris.

'I've tried every summer for five years to grow plants, but the sulphur smoke gets in and cuts them off before flowers come. I'm just that hungry to see a flower,' declared Mrs. Thomas.

'My Jennie is ten years old,' whispered Mrs. Morton, a hard-working, sweet-faced, horny-handed widow, 'and my Eddie is six, and I do not think that either of them has seen even a sunflower.'

'Then it's about time we had flowers here, ladies,' said Pastor Stewart. 'Here is Easter coming, and I am as hungry for the sight of a flower as any one.'

'If we have flowers for Easter,' said Mrs. Shaver, 'I speak now for an Easter lily.'

'I want one too,' said Mrs. Thomas.

'And I'; 'And I'; 'And I,' came from several others.

'We had better have a Flower Festival,' suggested Mrs. Shaver.

'A Flower Festival in Greenstone!' exclaimed Mrs. Morris.

'Yes; why not?' asked Mrs. Shaver.

'Whoever thought of such a thing?'

'If never before thought of, it will be a novelty and have that much more chance of being a success.'

'The sulphur smoke will kill the flowers before you can use them,' persisted Mrs. Morris.

'I'll sleep by them to guard them from the smoke,' declared Mrs. Shaver; and all the other ladies smiled at her ardour.

'And I'll help you, Mrs. Shaver,' said Miss Gilman, another sturdy little lover of flowers.

As a result of the gathering it was arranged that the church was to be decorated with flowers on Easter Sunday, and on Easter Monday they were to have a Flower Festival. The pastor's order for flowers was doubled, and other varieties and green stuff were ordered. It was impressed upon the city florists that the flowers were coming to a distant town and must be had for Easter, so that he must not only pick them well, but also send them in good time. He did his part so promptly that a large box of beautiful cut flowers, per Express, 'RUSH,' was on the Friday afternoon before Easter deposited in the church study of the pastor.

The ladies appointed to take charge of the flowers, the 'Flower Guards,' were immediately notified. With some other helpers, they came with pails of water to liberate and freshen the closely packed blooms.

'Oh, you precious, lovely things!' exclaimed Mrs. Shaver, as she opened the box and gazed at the flowers. Then taking up a lily, with dainty touch she smoothed out its petals and kissed it.

'Will they keep for Monday?' asked Miss Gilman, fearfully, but with her eye upon the sales.

'They will if we find a dark, cool place for them.'

'The church cellar will be just the place, then,' said Miss Gilman.

'You'll find plenty of cool places, Miss Gilman, before night,' commented Mrs. Morris.

'Why?'

'Why? Just listen to that north wind rattling the windows. It is getting colder every minute, and we'll have some frost to-night.'

Cold rain and sleet came on the wings of the wind that evening and was eddied around the church. The wind whistled, shook every loose door and window, and roared like a lion seeking his prey.

Inside the church the women were working hard. The flowers had been put in the church cellar, but the storm blew in a window and so the frost nearly nipped the flowers. They were quickly carried up into the body of the church, and a fire was put in the corner stove to keep out the cold. The storm soon spent its fury, the bitter atmosphere changed, and by ten o'clock at night the weather was quite mild. Then, with great relief, the Flower Guards went to their homes.

Smiling, the sun came up the next morning and looked upon streets full of mud and slush. In the afternoon the air became foggy, and great cloud-banks of sulphur smoke settled over the town and gradually rolled westward towards the church. Here they seemed to rest and to gather in intensity. Soon the sight of all the neighbouring

houses was obliterated. The ladies with lanterns struggled through the smoke and slush, sneezing and choking. They entered the lower part of the church and quickly shut the door behind them. Hastening to the flowers, they were delighted to find them with their heads up and smiling in innocence of the foe that had passed, and of the terrible enemy that was now besieging the place. Every window was examined, and with paper wads was made airtight. The doors were covered with shawls. The flowers were placed on the floor between the seats and covered with paper. Everything that could be thought of was done to save those flowers from the pitiless smoke.

Having done what they could and being fatigued by their labours, the Flower Guards went out the way they entered, their hearts full of fear for their pretty charges.

The fate of those flowers was the subject of the conversation of Greenstone. Some people scoffed at the preacher's foolishness in attempting such a thing. Others commented on the perversity and apparent intelligence of the sulphur smoke in accepting the challenge, and in its putting forth such determined efforts to devour the flowers. And there were many who saw in the effort nothing but a waste of money and time.

'It's just throwing good money into the gutter,' said Tom Tudhope to Mrs. Shaver. For the last half-hour this good woman had been trying to induce Tudhope to promise to attend church on the following day, but had so far failed. 'And

mighty little good either your flowers or your preachers do, anyway,' persisted Tudhope.

'You didn't talk that way in Frontenac,' said Mrs. Shaver, sadly.

'This is no place for either of them,' replied Tudhope, impatiently.

'You surely do not think that Greenstone is so hopeless as that!'

'Every bit,' he said bitterly, trying to smile.

'Mr. Tudhope,' said the little woman, looking kindly at him while a tear glistened in each eye, 'I believe that you are more sick at heart than cynical.' Then with a smile she added quickly, 'Don't you wish, Tom, that you had the flowers you had in Frontenac?'

'I am afraid that they are gone for ever,' said he, turning suddenly as if to leave, for he was touched by her kind words and did not wish to make any exhibition of his feelings.

'Easter and flowers bring hope,' said Mrs. Shaver, quickly; 'and don't you miss seeing them to-morrow.'

'If your flowers are there in the morning, I'll see them,' he said, and went away.

The next morning, a crisp Easter morning, the sun came up in a cloudless sky, and a south wind, that had just arisen, was blowing the smoke up through the north-eastern valley. Pastor Stewart was early at his desk and was reading in the Scriptures: 'In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see

the sepulchre.' Pausing a moment to meditate upon that event, he looked out of his window and saw two little women, with downcast looks, trudging up the hill with a pail of water. They were the Flower Guards.

'I wonder what we can do to bring them back to life?' said Miss Gilman.

'When sulphur smoke touches flowers it burns,' replied Mrs. Shaver, 'and there seems to be no hope.'

'Oh, I hope that they are not *all* killed.'

'We put them well under the seats.'

'I wrapped each lily in a separate paper, but that smoke was awful and the wind did not shift until morning.'

They opened the lower door and went in, sniffing as they entered.

'The horrid smoke, I smell it. It *has* got in. Oh, the poor flowers!'

'I smell it too, but it is not much. Perhaps this got in by the broken cellar window, but has not got upstairs.'

Though panting from their walk and labour of carrying up the water, the women raced upstairs to the flowers. Mrs. Shaver reached them first, and lifting off the paper she almost shouted in her delight—

'Oh, they're all right! How thankful I am!'

More careful examination showed that three of the lilies had suffered from the enemy, and their beautiful white leaves were touched as with a blight. But all the rest were smiling and healthy.

With thankful hearts and eager fingers they washed the stems of the flowers and arranged them in vases and jardinières, in saucers and bowls, on the pulpit and on the stands inside the altar railing. Then they hurried back to their homes, telling the good news to all they met. The news that the flowers had stood the night's siege spread quickly, and long before the hour of worship the church was filled with people, decked in their new spring clothes. From doubts and fears about the flowers, the hearts of the people sprang into exultant gladness. The music, the Scripture readings, and the sermon were full of spiritual joy and resurrection triumph. The preacher used the parable of the siege of the flowers by the frost and the sulphur smoke, and the victory, with good effect, and applied it with power to the lives and hearts of the people.

At the close of the service many lingered around the flowers. The children looked in wonder. Never before had the majority of them seen such glory. Men and women also came and gazed and wept. Hard-visaged Finlanders had their stolid faces lit as with a new light and the dark-haired sons of Italy had their eyes mellowed and no doubt their hearts softened as, for a little time at least, they forgot the hard knocks that most of them had received from the hands of the rougher, sterner Saxons.

In the midst of these onlookers appeared Tom Tudhope. At first he peeped at the flowers around others, but gradually he came forward. For a

moment he stood beside the vase of lilies. His frame quivered, and he passed on. Before a little bowl, filled with crimson carnations that stood inside the altar rail, he stopped. In his intentness he became oblivious to the people around him, and he sank on his knees to feast his eyes on the blooms and to smell them. His wife with her babe in her arms came and knelt beside him.

'Aren't they lovely!' said she. 'They are just like the red ones you used to grow.'

'May the Lord forgive me, wife,' said the man, not daring to look around for fear others might see the tears that had sprung into his eyes. 'I was just thinking of that too, and of how I had taken the red out of your cheeks and out of the children's.'

'And out of your own, Tom.'

'Mary, I've sinned against God and you and the children.'

'Oh, Tom, this is Easter morning.'

'Thank God, wife, for the thought. *It is* Easter morning. Then there is hope. By God's grace, Mary, the dead will come to life, and your cheeks will make these carnations pale again.'

'Amen,' said the pastor, as he stepped beside the kneeling figures. Then placing his left hand affectionately on the man's shoulder, he reached over with his right and pulled two red carnations out of the bowl.

'I think,' said he, 'the ladies will forgive me if i give these flowers to you to seal that vow.'

He gave one of the flowers to Mrs. Tudhope, who had risen quickly to her feet. She received it

eagerly with a smile of thanks. Mr. Tudhope rose slowly, tears filled his eyes again, and he was much shaken. He was trembling, so that the preacher both pitied him and rejoiced.

‘I’ll pin this flower here,’ he said cheerfully, ‘right on your breast—an Easter pledge of new love and new life in Christ Jesus.’

At first Mr. Tudhope could not speak, and he stood stiffly. The preacher was about to turn away when he said desperately and in a strange voice—

‘Sir, let me thank you.’

‘Thank God,’ said the preacher.

‘Yes, I will, and you too, sir. Once flowers grew in my garden and my conservatory. My home was then filled with happiness and my heart with peace and joy ; but I killed all those flowers. It is as you said this morning, sir, selfishness and greed are worse than frost and sulphur smoke. They did it. But, by God’s power, there will be a resurrection.’

* * * * *

The service on Sabbath evening was a greater triumph than in the morning. The Flower Festival was also a success, and into a hundred homes in that mining town, desolated by sulphur smoke, ‘God’s Smiles’ entered with their messages of beauty, love, and life ; and into several others with the same eloquence and power as into the home of Thomas Tudhope.

IX

AN ACCIDENT IN THE MINE

THE six-o'clock whistle had blown at Nickleton, and from the different mines the men came pouring forth, climbing the ladders from the lower galleries and scrambling up the jagged sides of the open pits. In their suits of blue drilling, all smeared with oil and dirt and wax from their candles, the men looked as rugged as the sides of the pit up which they were climbing. The scene above them was as beautiful as that around them was rough and, to a new-comer, full of terror. The setting sun was lavishly painting the clouds that were attending his departure, and as they piled up above each other or spread along his pathway near the horizon, generous to all, he clad them in the richest robes of gold, crimson, and purple. As the clouds and hills hid the sun from the rude gaze of earth, the yawning pits had fascinating and hungry looks, while the smelters, like glowing demons, shot their red light through the gathering gloom, and the molten slag, as it rolled down the hillside, seemed belching lava that would engulf the town and rejoice to toss it up in flames,

a cheerful offering to the frowning hills that raise their rugged, barren, thirsty faces to be kissed by the passing clouds.

The hour between the day and night shifts is a time for blasting; and the foreman of each mine with his men, who have charge of this work, wait until their cartridges have been fired. The foreman of No. 3 was John Rodda, a fine young man of five and twenty. He, with his men, had placed four sticks of dynamite in as many holes in the lower gallery of his mine. The entrance to this gallery was at the bottom of the hundred-foot open pit, under an arch of rock and near the 'skip,' by which the crushed rock and ore was hoisted to the rockhouse. The men had got well away, and then bang! went the first cartridge, and the earth rumbled with the shock and the noise of falling rock. Bang! bang! followed the second and third cartridges. The fourth, however, did not go off. The men waited for half an hour, and were growing restless for their suppers. Rodda went down into the pit to the mouth of the lower gallery to see, if he could, whether the fuse of the other cartridge were burning or not. He had barely kneeled down over the mouth of the gallery entrance when there was a terrific explosion. The force of the escaping gas and air and flying rock caught up the kneeling man and threw him against the rocks on the other side of the archway. There was no outcry, only one deep groan. The men rushed to the face of the pit and saw their foreman lying in a heap, bruised and unconscious.

They went quickly to the wounded man and, as gently as they could, lifted him to the mouth of the pit and summoned the Company's doctor. The flying rocks had caused some flesh wounds, but from the limpness of the man's back the doctor feared that it was broken. After half an hour's effort John recovered consciousness and was gently carried to his home over which his widowed mother presided, caring for him and his little brother.

The miners, big-souled, few-worded chaps, refrained from saying anything to the grief-stricken mother. The doctor knew little of the real nature of the accident, but was giving some explanation when John spoke up. He was suffering intense agony, but his thoughts were more bent on supporting and consoling his mother.

'Too bad, mother,' he said; 'but it isn't much, though. I'll knock off for a few days.'

And the men tried to look cheerful and agree with the words of their foreman, just to help him keep up his mother's heart. But when they were outside, big burly Tom Webb said—

'Did you ever hear the like of that? John's back is broke and he'll never get up from it. "Knock off for a few days!" He's knocked off for ever.' And, in spite of their sorrow at the accident, the men laughed with Webb, as they thought of Rodda's grit.

John's back, however, was not broken. Still, it was severely injured and the bone seemed to have lost all its power to support the body. All that medical science, both in Nickleton and in the



THERE WAS A TERRIFIC EXPLOSION.



hospitals of Toronto, could do, was done, but while the flesh wounds healed quickly, and the general bodily health was good, there was little or no recovery of strength in the back. Helpless as a child, he had to be moved, washed, and nursed by his mother.

The days grew into weeks and the weeks into months. The six-months' accident claim on the Miners' Accident Fund was cheerfully paid. After this John saw nothing ahead, unless the Benefit Society to which he belonged granted him the half of his policy on the claim of total disability. This claim he was not prepared to make. So he hoped on for six months more.

The active fellow could not lie idle. He read a little, but he had never learned to take companionship out of a book—the penalty of little schooling and being early set to work. This is a form of punishment from which only too many suffer. Sometimes, as in the case of John Rodda, who, owing to the early death of his father, had to become the breadwinner of the family and find support for his widowed mother and baby brother as well as for himself, there is a legitimate excuse; but there are many others who wilfully neglect their opportunities of intellectual improvement and soul culture, and when the manual activities of life are cut off they find themselves adrift. Blessed is that child of toil, man or woman, who at the end of a hard day's work can rest the body and find enjoyment and companionship in a good book!

John had not learned this. He read a little, and

kind friends who met with something that pleased them would come over and read to him. Amongst these, and the most welcome to John amongst them, was Nellie Gray. She and John had been 'engaged' to each other for some time, and the shock of his accident was as great to her as it was to John's mother. Whatever was her disappointment or how many were her tears, John never knew; before him she kept a bright face, and bravely cheered and ministered to him as she could. While John had hopes of recovery, he gladly accepted Nellie's sweet attentions and returned her affection with good interest. But with the lengthening of the time of recovery and the candid statements of his physicians, he began to question his right to Nellie's attention and affection.

The third six months was nearly at an end, and John had made a second expensive trip to the city hospital. The physicians told him that there was no hope whatever of his being able to walk again, as his backbone had become chalky, and that he might as well make up his mind to it and lay his plans accordingly. With heavy hearts John and his mother returned to Nickleton. The only progress that he had made was in general health. He was able to use his arms freely and thereby shift his body around, but otherwise he was as helpless as a three-months'-old baby. When he reached home he sent word to his Benefit Society that he wished to put in his application for the total disability claim. He also sent a note to Nellie, saying that he wanted to see her.

'Nellie,' said John, plunging into his message as soon as she had greeted him, 'you have been very good to me.'

'Now don't talk to me like that, my dear, or look at me in that way.'

'But, Nellie, you must listen to me, for I must say it.'

Nellie tried to laugh and make merry. Then a cloud swept over John's face and gathered in a dark scowl on his brow. This frightened Nellie, and with a passionate outburst, which brought some tears, she exclaimed—

'Oh, those horrid city doctors have been frightening you again. Your mother isn't cast down, and I'll not be, either.'

In spite of his determination, John weakened, and he allowed Nellie to brush away the cloud from his brow and kiss him.

'But, Nellie,' he began again, 'my very love for you says that I must speak even if I kill myself in doing so. I cannot get better. I will be a lifelong nuisance to my friends.'

Nellie tried to put her hand over his mouth to prevent him saying anything more.

'Now stop,' she said, and shook her finger at him. But he put her hand away with such emphasis that it startled her.

'If you won't let me say it as I want to, I'll have to say it as I can,' said John, with grim determination. 'It's hard enough for me to be made to crush the hope and life out of one woman's heart without doing it for two.'

'John!' said Nellie, angrily, as she sprang to her feet.

'Yes, Nellie, that is just it, and as I have truly loved you, I can't allow you to come here any more. Life is too precious a thing for you to bother with me. Go your way, and may God be kind to give you a good fellow, and one who will think as much of you as I did.'

In a whirlwind of thought and emotion the girl stood, amazed and speechless; then, stepping back, she leaned against the wall. Mrs. Rodda came in to minister to John. Seeing Nellie, she realized what had taken place, for John had warned her of it. So putting her arms lovingly around the girl she led her out of the room. In the outer room Nellie seemed to recover herself, and Mrs. Rodda thought that she was going to go quietly away. First she did go towards the door of the hall, but when Mrs. Rodda's back was turned, she flew back into John's room. Throwing herself down on her knees at John's side, she begged him in tears to take back his words.

'For months,' said John, 'I have been thinking of saying something like what I have, but I hoped on and thought that I would get all right, and that I might then show you that you had not loved the wrong fellow.'

'And I haven't,' said the sobbing girl.

'Nellie, go home and think about it, and you'll see that I am right.'

'You need some one to take care of you.'

'Mother and Jim are here.'

AN ACCIDENT IN THE MINE 101

For the first time in her life Nellie thought that she hated that godly, patient woman, and the angry word was on her tongue, but she kept it back.

‘But perhaps God meant me to be with you, sick or well.’

‘Thank God, that vow was not taken, and the accident absolves you.’

Nellie arose. She seemed to be returning to a new world.

‘And I am never to come and see you again?’

John was greatly relieved now that he had done his duty as he conceived it, and, thinking that Nellie had also come to herself, he smiled and said, as he tried to be merry—

‘Yes, you may come and introduce your husband to me.’

Nellie abruptly turned on her heel and left the house.

To occupy his time and try to do something to keep the wolf of want from the door, John learned to knit coarse mits and socks, which Jimmy sold to the miners and other friends. The Benefit Society, after a three months’ further wait, granted the total disability claim. John paid off all his debts, and with the rest his mother set up a little store of small ware needed in the miners’ and settlers’ homes.

Nellie found little comfort in her life. She withdrew from the church choir, and was seldom found at any of the social or religious gatherings of the village. She persisted in thinking about John, and in sending little gifts up to the house for him,

which his mother accepted with many expressions of thanks.

The village people were quick to notice Nellie's actions, and also that she had left off visiting the Rodda home. They readily put their own interpretation on these facts, and their surmises were not very far astray. Some expressed themselves that John had only done what was right and manly in freeing the girl; others, however, thought that if Nellie wanted to love him still he should have let her, he was a fine fellow.

Some of these remarks were whispered to Nellie, doubtless to try to find whether they were correct or not, but Nellie jumped at the conclusion that John had told them what he had done. This angered her, but she kept her thoughts and words to herself. She did not know at first what course to take, but determined on some retaliation. She attended a social gathering, and was unwontedly gay. This new move created no little gossip and surprise. She then resumed her place in the church choir, and was frequently seen at public gatherings.

Many of her old admirers were glad to see her back, and considered themselves free to make what advances they could in their acquaintance, since Rodda was out of the field. New men had also found their way to Nickleton, and among them was the polished and attractive son of the manager of the mining company, George Rowland. He was soon at Nellie's side. He found her company more congenial than that of any other young lady; while

Nellie was flattered by his attentions. With his assistance Nellie soon became the most graceful dancer at the weekly gatherings at the Orange Hall. Being thus highly favoured by the attentive young men, Nellie was greatly envied by the other young ladies of the town and their mothers.

In this way another year had nearly passed away. The snow of winter lay deeply upon the hills and rocks, the mines were kept busy, and the smelters at full blast. The weekly gatherings at the Hall were more largely attended, and lasted longer than they did in the warm summer time. About this time young Rowland was suddenly sent away to Europe—'for his health,' it was said. And Nellie as suddenly ceased to attend the gatherings at the Hall. The people did not think that winter voyages to Europe were taken 'for health,' and thought of other reasons, and among the surmises that were now thrown out, one declared that George and Nellie must have had a quarrel; another was that the old people had their eye on somebody else for their son, and did not look favourably upon his attentions to Nellie—though why they should object to Nellie, none could see—and many women who, a short time before, had been belittling Nellie, in the hopes of turning young Rowland's attentions towards their own daughters, were now as earnestly extolling her virtues.

Nellie did not help those gossips or encourage her defenders. She turned her attention anew to the work of the church, and threw herself with

energy into the preparations for the annual Christmas festival. From these gatherings many young men were ready to act as her escort, but she was very chary in accepting them, and escaped whenever she could. One amongst them she was, however, ready to accept—that rough but sterling fellow, Tom Webb.

Tom had been faithful to his former boss. He had proved himself a true and a tried friend to him, and it seemed inevitable that Tom and Nellie should speak of John Rodda. One evening, after they had walked along a while and their conversation had grown somewhat warm and confiding, Tom remarked—

‘So you have dropped John, have you?’

‘Did John say—who said so?’

‘Oh, no one in particular. Only little Jimmy said the other day that you hadn’t been to see them since last winter, and that they hadn’t heard or received anything from you for quite a while.’

‘Did John ever say anything to you about me?’

‘Yes, a lot.’

‘I thought so. He might know how to keep his mouth shut.’

‘He said you were a marvel to him. He did not think that women could love so. He did not know what kind of love Jonathan had for David, when David could say, “Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women,” for he thought that your love for him passed all things he ever knew.’

‘What! did he not tell you how——’

'He told me that he had loved you very much, and that he hoped some fine fellow would love you as he once did.'

'And does now.'

'He did not say so.'

'But he looked so.'

'He didn't say so.'

'You men can't see anything, unless you're told to look. Did he say anything more about me?'

'He wanted me to be kind to you and help you in any way that I could, seeing he wasn't able, nor ever would be.'

'That's why you began going to church, is it?'

The big fellow blushed.

'That is why you went and took dancing lessons, and came to the Orange Hall?'

'Hard work that; I'm so big and clumsy.'

'That is why,' said Nellie, as if he had not spoken, and as her mind went quickly over the events of the past few months, 'you came to my rescue in the woods that Sunday afternoon, with your gun in your hands, and ordered that scoundrel to turn round and drive back to town and to give you a ride back while he was doing it?'

And Nellie turned white, put her hands over her face, and shuddered as she thought of the event.

'God pity the young people if that is what dancing and dance-halls lead to,' said Nellie, in a voice that sounded like a moan. 'I'll have nothing to do with them more. You do not know what you saved me from.'

'Perhaps not,' replied Webb, quietly, 'but I overheard something young Rowland said to one of his friends, and that is why I was on the spot.'

'Do you go to see John now?' asked Nellie.

'Nearly every day. His mother is near worn out, nursing him and watching the store.'

'I'll go there to-morrow and offer my services, and if John orders me out, I'll marry you, and go to see him with you. A protector is the next best thing to a lover, and perhaps I need protection against my lover in order that I may serve him.'

X

A STRANGE PEACEMAKER

EDWARD'S birthday had arrived, and as a pleasant reminder his brother James, and sisters Mary and Flossie, had given him a bright, nickel-plated mouth-organ. To see that he was delighted with the present, we had only to watch the smiles that played around his merry eyes and to ask his mother how much noise he made with it.

The day had been full of pleasure for the little lad. In the afternoon several boys and girls came in to wish him 'many happy returns of the day,' and his mother asked them all to an afternoon tea-party in the playroom. But the climax of Edward's joy was when his uncle Charlie came home with father in the evening. Uncle Charlie's previous visit had been shortened by a call which had taken him out of the city, and none of the little folks knew when he was to return. In this way his coming was a complete and pleasant surprise.

After the joyous meeting was over and supper had been enjoyed together, the family gathered as usual around the fireplace, where James and the

girls plied their uncle with questions as to his trip. In the joy of having his uncle and father, and the merry-making, Edward had forgotten his mouth-organ, but as soon as the supper was over, he got it and played it to his heart's content.

'My! but you are a noisy boy!' exclaimed his father.

'Oh, that is nothing,' said Edward's mother. 'You should have heard him this morning.'

'It's a birthday present,' explained Flossie.

Then Edward tried to give his father and uncle a greater exhibition of the little instrument's ability to make a noise.

'It's a noise-maker all right,' said the father, laughing at the red cheeks as they puffed in and out, driving wind into the mouth-organ.

'I well remember when my little mouth-organ was peacemaker,' said Uncle Charlie.

'A peacemaker!' said Mary, in surprise.

'Do you carry a mouth-organ?' asked James.

'Have you got yours here?' queried Flossie.

'Was it a birthday present?' asked Edward, taking his new toy out of his mouth.

'You seem to be interested in my having a mouth-organ,' said Uncle Charlie, laughingly.

'And I don't wonder,' said the children's father. 'Whatever do you carry such a thing for?'

'For company, chiefly,' replied Uncle Charlie. 'I am fond of music, and this is the handiest and most portable of all musical instruments. You can carry it in your pocket, and whenever you have a little idle time or wish relief from any severe strain

of work, a few minutes with this little musical companion will put things on a more endurable basis. The last one I had I traded away on the night it did such good work.'

'When was that?' asked James.

'It was in a mining town in the Rocky Mountains, when I was on my Western trip last summer. After my day's work was done I had gone back to the hotel. It was such a place as is found in many a Western mining town, where the biggest apartment is bar-room, parlour, and general business room, all combined. A lot of big, hearty miners had come in from their diggings, and were bent upon having a spree. It was a very sad sight to see how quickly those fine fellows were parting with their gold dust and nuggets, which they had secured with so much hardship. It was also sickening to see them making beasts of themselves, as they ostentatiously treated and tried to outdrink each other.

'The rude fun grew fast and furious. The whisky was making them lose their good nature, and they were rapidly becoming quarrelsome. As some reeled against others they were rudely shoved away with a hoarse and rough "Keep off! you're drunk!"

'These acts were resented, and some came to blows. At these quarrels the saloon-keeper only laughed. Similar bouts and rough knocks were no new sight to him. Suddenly there was a gleam of a knife! I sprang to my feet from the seat I had taken near the corner, and, quickly making my

way through the crowd, I seized the arm which held the knife and tried to wrest it from the man, who had drawn it in anger from its sheath. With some assistance I got the knife away. After I had succeeded in my efforts, I had almost to laugh at the change in the man; when he had the knife he fought like a demon, but now that I had it he whimpered like a whipped schoolboy.

"Give me my knife," he said.

"When you are sober," I replied.

"But I ain't drunk," he argued.

"What did you draw your knife for, then?" I asked.

"As I was slipping the knife into my pocket, I felt my mouth-organ, and pulling it out said—

"Here, let's have a swap."

"What's that?" he asked.

"A mouth-organ," I said.

"I can't play it," he growled.

"Well, I can," I replied.

"Hit up a tune, boss," said one from the crowd, who had become greatly interested in us.

"All right, boys," said I. "Give me breathing room, and I'll play a little for you."

My late combatant did not seem to know what to do, when the big arm of another miner swept around in front of him and moved him back a pace or two.

I ran the mouth-organ over my lips, and then played a couple of lively airs. Some of the boys began to shuffle their big cowhide boots rather lively around and stamp upon the floor,

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keeping time with the music. Then I played some suggestive airs like "Old folks at home," and "Take me back to home and mother." After I played the latter I sang the words. The men became as quiet as mice.

"Here, quit that now!" said the bar-keeper, who had not received a call for a drink since I had begun to play. "If you don't quit, you'll be sending some of the lads home crying to their mothers!" And he tried to laugh.

"Don't you mind him!" said a miner. "Just you give us another song, and then we'll have a drink and leave."

The other miners joined in with the request for another song, and not one moved away from me to the bar.

"What shall it be?" said I.

"Sing that one over again," suggested one; and the others joined in the request.

"I'll teach you the chorus," said I, "and you can sing while I play the mouth-organ."

This pleased them very much, and they all joined in quite heartily. After they had sung the chorus over several times, I said, "Here goes another song," and I sang "Where is my wandering boy to-night?"

As I looked into the faces of those fellows, I had to meet many an inquiring gaze. For as they looked at me, it seemed as if most of them wanted to stop me in the song, and each ask about his mother—if I knew her, and if I had any idea of how he had left her, and what kind of a life he

had lived since he left home? I sang with all my might, and they were deeply moved. Two or three backed up to the door and slipped out.

"I'll swap!" said the young miner whose knife I had, as he came forward with extended hand.

"But you said you couldn't play," I replied. "Let me give you something that will be of some use to you."

"I lied when I said I couldn't play," he said. "I can play a piece that my Sunday-school teacher taught me. I'll play it now, though I haven't put an organ in my mouth for years. And if you know the piece, sing it for us."

'I handed him the organ, and he played "There is a gate that stands ajar," which I gladly sang for them.

'After we had finished playing and singing, some of the miners went quietly up to the bar, got a drink and went away, while others left without taking another drop of liquor. My combatant asked me to go outside with him, and, after a sharp look at him, I went. He told me a strange tale. I hope it is not too common among those fellows. He told me that he had on him a belt full of gold, which he had intended to spend in a debauch. This he removed, and asked me to take it and bring it to his people in Ontario. He said that he would sell out his diggings and follow shortly after. I suggested that he should take the belt of gold home himself and let me sell out his diggings. He hesitated a moment, but after I

had given him my credentials, he agreed to the proposal.

'I saw him the other day. He has secured a good situation here, and is happily reunited with his family. He has had my old mouth-organ gold-plated, in honour of what it has done. I gave him back his knife, and he gave me its weight in gold nuggets which he had brought home.'

'Hurrah for him!' said the father.

'Show us some of the gold nuggets,' said James.

'Play a tune on my mouth-organ,' put in Edward, generously offering his little treasure to his uncle.

'What a blessing you travelling men can be, if you want to do good!' said the children's mother. 'Like your Master, you meet and eat with publicans and sinners. Your business cultivates tact and teaches you much about human nature, and if you have a mind to do right and a heart filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ, how great are your opportunities!'

'That's so, sister,' said Uncle Charlie; 'and it also shows what a little mouth-organ can do. Doesn't it, Edward? The little noise-maker can be a jolly good peacemaker. Yes, I'll play you a piece, and then we will show James some of the gold nuggets, just as they are found in streams or dug out of the hillside mines.'

XI

THE DRUMMER'S PASTORAL CALL

CHARLES MANSFIELD was one of the most popular travellers for the well-known firm of Coats and Sons. He was a jolly, round-faced man, with friends in almost every walk and station in life. The following is his account of the crisis of his life, which was so suddenly and strangely sprung upon him.

‘I was sent on the north route,’ said Commercial-traveller, but generally called ‘Drummer,’ Mansfield, ‘and there were several little village and country stores, which stood back thirty or forty miles from the railroad, that had to be called upon. I had to hire a rig to get to these places. There was so much to do at the railroad town that it was well into the afternoon ere I drove away. After I had driven about fifteen miles, the sky became inky black. My watch said, when I struck a match to see its face, that it was very little after four o’clock, but it was so dark that I could not see my horse’s head. I did not know the road. Distant thunder began to roll, and the wind sighed like a woman in distress.

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'The twinkling of a barn lantern at the side of the road told me that I was not the only one out in the dark. When the lantern came near, I shouted and received a reply from an old man in the quaintest dialect I ever heard.

"How far is it to Baillie's Corners?" I asked.

"As far as to the cars, sir," came from the neighbourhood of the lantern. This was followed by, "Yer in for a dousin' if ye try for there this black night."

"It has become dark very suddenly," I assented.

"Suddent," he replied; "suddenter than a woman catches up a rollin'-pin to prove her point."

'Not desiring revelations of domestic infelicity, and anxious to get myself and stuff under shelter ere the rain fell, I said rather sharply—

"Is there any house near here?"

"Only mine, and the one you left three miles back, and the widder's yonder in the gully straight on about a mile and a half."

"Have you accommodation for a man and horse over night?" I asked.

"No, sir," he replied, "I haven't. My house isn't big enough for two most times, and there ain't an inch for another. But the widow'd ought to have room. She has a barn and house, and you might, if yer not too stuck up, tumble in with the boys. Sorry to send you on in such a night, but better 'an ye have been out in warse. Keep in the centre of the road. There's a jog at the widder's, so watch for the light in her window."

'When the old man was finishing his injunctions, he had begun to walk on, and his last words were barely audible in the wind. I shouted my great obligations to him, started my horse, and scanned the road for the "light in the widder's window." The old man said "a mile and a half," but in that dark, dreary, windy night, it seemed as if I were never going to see the coveted light. I could not trust the horse to go faster than a walk, for I might be landed in the ditch. At last, in the distance, with a blurry effect, as a star behind a cloud, I saw the light on the left of the road. I whipped up the horse, growing reckless in my impatience and desire to reach a haven of refuge. Recklessness always meets its punishment. I had forgotten the jog in the road. The horse plunged right into the ditch, and while the rig was not upset, it was soon stuck fast. I got out and quieted the horse, which had been struggling. I unhitched it from the rig, tied it to the fence, and then went to the house. The widow herself answered my knock. I told her I was stuck in the ditch, and would like to borrow a lantern to get my rig out. The widow was a woman of medium height. There was strength of mind exhibited in the lines of her mouth, but sorrow had taken the brilliancy out of her eyes, and their subdued expression mellowed and sweetened that of the whole face. In answer to my request, she turned to a boy about seventeen years of age, who had evidently just come in from the barn with his lantern, which was still lit, and asked

him for it. She picked up a shawl, flung it over her head, and, taking the lantern, came out with me, telling the boy to come and help us. When we got the horse and rig out of the ditch, and on the road again, she said—

“This is an awful night to be out in!”

“Yes,” I said; “can you not find accommodation for me to-night?”

“There isn't much accommodation for a gentleman like you,” she replied.

“It isn't a night to stand on ceremony,” I answered, “I'll be glad of a covering for myself and a shelter for my horse and rig.”

‘The woman hesitated, and then said, “I have not got much of a place, but I can't see you out in a night like this. Will,” she said, addressing her boy, “show this gentleman where to put his horse. You can run the rig in the barn.” Then she went into the house.

‘Will and I saw the horse into the stable, and put the rig in the barn, as directed, and, after fixing up as snugly as possible, we also went to the house. This I saw to be a small, one story and a half log house, clapboarded on the outside, and fairly well finished with planed boards on the inside. It looked very bare of fixings, but it was clean and tidy. The bare floor was relieved by a few woven rag mats. A few home-made shelves were fastened to the walls, and on them were some odd bits of delf, little pictures and sweet grass. Some good old pictures were also tacked up on the walls. The partitions were made

of thin pine boards, and it was but a step from the combination kitchen, dining-room, and sitting-room into a couple of bedrooms. A ladder stood at the end of the room, and led up to the attic.

‘The little drop-leaf table had been placed in the centre of the room, and when Will and I entered it was covered with a plain cloth, and tea was nearly ready for the family. There was also a place for myself. Besides Will, the widow had three other children: Tom, a sturdy boy about twelve years of age; Mary, a quiet, industrious little girl of nine or ten years of age; and there was also another boy, a chubby-faced, bashful little fellow, about seven years old, whom they called Charlie.

‘Over the tea cups we chatted about my getting into the ditch, and in the fun some of the strangeness was worn off. The meal was plain. We had good, home-made bread, some slices of hard, cold meat, milk, and, what seemed a special treat, some preserves, made of wild raspberries. In the conversation of the table my hostess mentioned the names of some ministers who had visited my father’s parsonage, and a chord of mutual interest was struck. After we had finished tea, Will and Tom took their lantern and, like little men, went out to fix up their cattle and horses for the night. Mary helped her mother with the dishes. I determined to take the bashfulness out of Charlie, and was soon on the floor with him, playing jacks, and building houses with blocks of wood. When the boys came back from

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the barn, and Mary was through her tasks, the leaves of the table were put down, and it was shoved to the wall. Tom and Mary joined in the games, but Will, with fatherly and patronizing air, only looked on. The mother was busy carrying sheets in and out of the little rooms. Soon she had things to her satisfaction, and then she too sat down. For a time she was amused at our antics, and she smiled with Charlie as he laughed at the fun we were having on the floor. Once his mother rebuked him for his boisterousness and freedom with a stranger. This made him again the bashful boy, and I could do nothing with him.

'The conversation about the old preachers was resumed. The widow deplored the loss of the old visiting pastors who used to go from house to house calling upon the people. Their visits were red-letter days in her home. When her husband was living, she said that they were regularly visited, but it was more than seven years since he died. She looked with eyes full of tears at her little seven-year-old, who now nestled his curly head in his mother's lap.

"He never saw him," she said, half meditatively; and then, resuming the conversation, added: "The preacher we had when John" (her husband) "died called two or three times after, but he left these parts, and I haven't seen one in this house for five years."

"But I suppose other people have come and helped you," I said.

"No, not many," she replied. She was loth to

talk of those sad days, and of the neglect which she had met with at the hands of this cold world, but little by little I found out her story.

'After her husband died, an effort was made by some of the kinder neighbours to distribute the children amongst them, but the widow stubbornly refused to let her children go. She determined to keep her farm, and also to keep her children around her. Her husband and she had cleared the bush, worked the little farm, and had paid for it. Will was only ten, but he could do a great deal of work. When Charlie came, there was great suffering in the home, and none came to their help but Old Jimmie and his quick-tempered wife.

"Old Jimmie" was my friend, whom I had met with a lantern. This old couple were poor hands to work, but they could be kind when they wanted to. Jimmie had been an old soldier. He could handle a gun, but he was of very little use with a plough or a hoe. As there was very little to hunt, his living was generally pretty slim.

'When John Robins was alive, the keeper of the general store at the Corners was never asked for credit; but in the time of sorrow and distress credit was asked for and obtained. When Mrs. Robins was able to go round again, she worked the farm, and had Old Jimmie's wife do what she could with the house work. There were little or no harvests the first years, and the widow asked the store-keeper to take things out of the house for payment. She gave him all her jewellery, and the trinkets that her husband had given her in

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happier days. She then sacrificed her furniture, and had them replaced with such as Old Jimmie and Will could make. She sacrificed her choice dishes, and, in fact, almost everything that was of market value had been taken.

'It had been a hard struggle. Will had borne the work like a hero. His mother said that she had cried because she could not let him go to school. If he had gone, she would have been alone. She still had some of her husband's books, and an old friend in the city sent her an occasional bundle of papers. She had taught Will to read, and they often read to each other when they were not too tired after the day's work.

'There was a note of cheer, however, in the bitter struggle. The results of last year were the best yet, and the younger children were allowed to go to school. The widow gave thanks for all her blessings, and said that they were going to have their father's name put on the Historic Roll of the Thank-offering.

"The what?" I asked, in surprise.

"The Historic Roll," she answered, smiling through her tears. "John was a good husband to me, and God has been so merciful to us that we are going to have our part in the Thank-offering."

'I was almost struck dumb. I never had such a sensation before in my life, but I stammered—

"Why, woman, you've nothing to be thankful for. You've been robbed of your husband, neglected by the Church, all your goods taken from you for bread, your children robbed of their education,

and you yourself sent out into the fields to slave to keep your body and soul and children together."

"But that isn't all," said the woman with tears, that were more of triumph than of sorrow, in her eyes. "Long years ago, God gave me one of the kindest of lovers, and he became one of the dearest of husbands. Life was never brighter, and I was so happy with him. He was always so good, so kind, so thoughtful. Shortly after we were married we went together to a camp-meeting. Oh, those were glorious days! God did come down and bless our souls. John and I were converted, and made happier than ever. Because God had touched our hearts we seemed nearer to each other. Whenever we could, we would visit those glorious Gospel meetings. Preaching service came to a place six miles away, and we used to go regularly every Sunday. But after he died I didn't want to go. I would stay at home and read the Bible John and I loved so well. And I thought of John's death. It was happy and sad. John worried for a while about me and the children, and then he brightened up and talked of God's great love in forgiving our sins, in blessing us in many ways, in the children, in the farm, and we learned to trust Him. So John died happy and full of faith that God would care for us."

"But has he?" I couldn't help it. The question slipped out before I thought, so intense were my feelings. The woman looked at me with reproach through her tears.

"But hasn't he?" she replied. "When John

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was converted, so was I. When John would read the Bible and pray around the family altar we'd laugh and cry for joy together. When the children came, they were all well born. They were all perfect in health. God has called John to heaven, and his death was so happy and triumphant; and where John is, I am going too. In the last bundle of papers that I received, there is an account of how the church is raising a thank-offering to God for His mercies, and as God has been so good to us, we are going to have our part. I talked the matter over with the children, and we have determined to place father's name in the 'In Memoriam' part of the 'Historic Roll.' It is the least we can do to thank God for all His mercies, and bear remembrance to the sacred name of him who was, and yet is, so much to us."

'Then she turned and reached me her husband's Bible, and said—

"It is so good to have a man again in the house to lead in family prayers. So you will please read and pray with us to-night."

'I was helpless. My heart never before played such havoc with my self-control. I felt humiliated, abashed, dumbfounded, in the presence of that widow, saint and heroine. Where was my thankfulness to Almighty God, when I had ten thousand times more things to be thankful for? Where was my religion, when I was brought up in a parsonage with saintly parents, with Sunday-school, church, and college blessings—and I now a scapegrace of a drummer, with no faith in man, no hope in God,

and no appreciation of my favours? And yet, such as I was, I was asked to conduct family prayers for that saint, full of love to God, and showing her thankfulness by gathering up from the last remnant of her possessions a thank-offering to Him for her many mercies.

‘I know not how long I sat there holding the Bible, for, for the time, I seemed to lose my grip on things of earth. But I was awakened from my reverie by the woman saying—

“John’s favourite passages were the first part of the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, the hundred and third Psalm, the twelfth of Isaiah, and the eleventh chapter of Matthew’s gospel.”

‘To gain time and try to think, I read the whole of them. They were not hard to find, for the places were well used and well marked. Every word that I read seemed to go home and find a lodgment in my soul. I seemed to realize that I had been “in a desert land, in the waste, howling wilderness,” but God was mercifully leading me, instructing me, keeping me as the apple of His eye, and out of this rocky place I was being “made to suck honey.” The praises of David refreshed my memory of many a thanksgiving prayer I had heard my father utter in the parsonage. The words of Isaiah smote and helped me; and the passionate words of the Saviour drew my soul to His wounded side, and I realized His pardoning love. I could not help but feel, as my heart was bounding for joy. Oh, happy babe in Christ, you happy, poverty-stricken widow, with such sweets

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of pardon on your soul, with such love in your heart, and with such riches of thankfulness. How poor the wisdom, the riches, the friendship of earth beside! I led that widow's family in prayer like a bishop, and retired to the room she had set apart for me, praising God.

'The next morning, when I arose, the whole world seemed new to me. All was joy and peace within my heart, and I thought of how my old father and mother would weep and shout for joy when they heard the story of pardon and peace that I then could tell.

'I took a stroll around the house. The storm had broken in the night, and much rain had fallen, but the morning was clear and beautiful. I found the widow in the barn, milking her cows, and the boys wrestling manfully with their chores. I threw off my coat and did what I could to help, although all three protested. When the chores were done, and the cows milked, we came back to the house and found that little Mary had set the table and prepared a big pot of porridge. Plain fare, but plenty, and with the peace of God in the heart with thanksgiving, it seemed provision for a prince. I never dreamed that a change of heart and a bite of morning air could so increase one's appreciation of God's humblest mercies. It's good domestic economy.

'After breakfast, I was again asked to conduct family prayers, and did so with less reluctance, and, perhaps, with less success. But they all seemed pleased and thankful.

‘As I left, I offered the widow money for her entertainment, but she refused it, saying that the visit was like a pastoral call, and she could never think of taking money for such. I could not convince her that it was her right, and so gave it up. I, however, left her some clothing, out of which she could make suits for the boys; and to Mary I gave “a little present,” as I told her mother. It was a five-dollar gold pocket-piece, which I had carried for some time. However, I felt that it was well placed at last. I told Mary she could use it for herself or for putting her mother’s name on the Historic Roll beside her father’s, and if she did the latter I would send her a new dress when I returned home. In due time Mary received her dress.’

XII

HOW I WON A CONGREGATION

TO the glories of Muskoka, where the woodman's axe is heard, and where the adventurous settlers are pushing their little clearings, I was sent.

My mission, I found, consisted of six appointments, widely scattered. The ones nearer civilization were fairly well sustained, but those that caused the preacher many pains to reach were not so well supported; one especially was neglected by the people. The preacher might almost suffer martyrdom to get to their doors with the Bread of Life; they cared not, nor did they want anything to do with the man. This inconsiderate treatment on the part of the settlers was due to a prejudice that had been diligently spread amongst them that all the preachers were after was their money. The absurdity of such a prejudice might have been at once apparent if the people had only thought a moment; for they themselves seldom saw a dollar bill, much less a fiver, in a year.

The services at this out-appointment were held in the school-house every other Sabbath morning.

The Mission Board had asked the people here to contribute eight dollars yearly to their preacher's salary. This sum to many of them seemed a fortune, and was, therefore, an outrageous amount to be extorted from them.

My predecessor had diligently attended to his duty towards this appointment for a few months. One of the men passed a hat at each service to the few who attended. After a careful count, the contents of the hat were handed over to the preacher. These amounts totalled up to exactly ninety-nine cents.

'I'll chip in another, and make it the even dollar,' said the generous steward who took up the collections.

In this condition my predecessor left that mission appointment to me, and in a private letter he used concerning it some strange backwood phrases that had better not be repeated.

To that place I was to go the first Sabbath after my arrival.

The day was delightful, and I set off in good spirits. I followed the bush road as indicated; then I entered a denser part of the forest, where I had to get off my horse and walk, as the branches were so low. I had to jump my horse over a rail fence with a clearing on the other side. We call it a 'clearing,' but that word is to be understood as meaning merely the cutting down of trees and the taking out of some of the stumps. Stones are not counted, as their extraction and removal come under the separate term of 'stoning the land.'

In the centre of this clearing was a little potato patch, which was directly in my path. My approach was announced by several dogs, and the almost immediate appearance of a dapper little woman, with a petticoat of—well, if it could not boast the proud distinction of Joseph's coat in having many colours, it had many patches. Yet, withal, she wore no rags, and was far neater than many women who lived in more pretentious places.

She bustled out to me, shouting to beware of her potato patch. I tried to calm her fears, saying that my horse was dainty-footed, and that there was lots of room between the potato patch and the fence. She was exceedingly observant, however, and watched my horse with the diligence of a policeman.

It only took a few minutes, and the bars on the opposite side were reached. In this time she found out that I was a new missionary who was expected from the city.

The woman quickly lowered the bars for me, and I led my horse over. On the other side I made efforts to be gallant, and to replace the bars; but she said that she would do it, and that it was not a preacher's work. However, I insisted, and succeeded in replacing one of the poles, which the unsophisticated call 'bars.'

The 'bars' up, I touched my hat to the woman, and was about to spring upon my horse and pursue my way, when the woman's face appeared smiling over the bars, with arms on the top rail, and face on her hands. She was inclined to talk. I did not

wish to be discourteous, and wanted to push on to my service; but I also needed some fresh directions, as the way was very tortuous, and, to any but the skilled in woodcraft, misleading.

To my question about the way, she replied with another question—

‘So you come from the city, did ye?’

‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘I did.’

‘You must find it very hot up here, don’t ye?’

‘Oh no,’ I again replied, ‘it is delightfully cool here in the shade of the trees, and by the lakes and rivers. It is the city that is scorching in this July sun. Is this the path I take to the school-house?’

‘Why, don’t you know the blazes?’

‘The blazes!’ I thought, ‘what can she mean? Is this a Muskoka oath?—backwoods are noted for that kind of speech.’ Alas for the ignorance of the city-bred boy, even with a university degree! Red blazes he knew; blue blazes he had experimented with; but ‘backwoods blazes’ he knew not.

‘No,’ I said; and it costs a newly-fledged grad. something to confess his ignorance—of anything. ‘I do not know what “blazes” you mean.’

‘Why, what’ll ye do if ye get lost?’

‘Why,’ said I, somewhat amused at the idea, and the woman’s evident delight at the prospect of what she was positive would happen—‘why, I suppose I shall get lost, that is all.’

‘Then the bears’ll get ye, then what’ll ye do; then what’ll ye do?’ and she almost clapped her hands in glee over my sorry plight and bruin’s easy victory.

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'Why,' I drolled, 'I suppose then I shall have to submit.' I wanted to press on as time was flying, and I again asked for directions; but she had some more interesting information about wolves and such things to give me, besides that about the mystifying 'blazes' and the pugnacious bears, ere she ended up with—

'Keep the bush path nearest the lake, and you'll get there all right.'

'Won't you come up to service?' I asked.

'Me!' and she laughed at the idea. 'I don't s'port no parson; but I'll tell the old man you've come. Perhaps he'll go.'

I touched my hat, sprang on my horse, and rode away.

At service there were a few men and women, and quite a number of children out to see 'what the new preacher was like.' Great accounts of him had been spread because he was from the city, and was a college man with letters at the end of his name.

The attendance, even with such inducements, was not what it should have been, and I determined to see what diligent pastoral visiting could do to help the people to an appreciative sense of the privileges that were brought to their doors.

In this work I had penetrated and surveyed quite a large region of territory. I even began to master some of the arts of woodcraft so as to be able to read some of the 'blazes,' which are marks upon the trees, indicating bush paths; but I also got lost several times, and I met a bear. As this

denizen of the forest seemed to be as much afraid of me as I of him, we came to a quick and mutual agreement to avoid any *casus belli*.

I had ridden one day to a place which I thought must be near the 'end of things.' After I had paid a visit to the family and was about to leave, my hostess asked—

'Didn't you know that Mrs. Smith's boy was sick?'

'Who is Mrs. Smith?' I asked in reply. 'I never heard of a Mrs. Smith here; and how could I know of her sick boy?'

'Well, she lives about two miles in the bush, and her little boy, Freddy, is nearly dead. He's been sick dear knows how long.'

'Let us go and see her. I suppose you know the way?'

'Oh, yes, I know the way, and I'll go with you,' was her reply.

She gave a few instructions to her eldest daughter, donned a shawl and hat, and we took the bush trail for Mrs. Smith's. There was no road through the forest, and so I had to leave my horse behind.

After a long tramp through the bush, we came to the isolated settler's home. I was introduced into the one-roomed little log-house. It was about twelve feet by twenty, containing two beds in one end, a bureau, a stove, a drop-leaf table in the other, with very little space to turn in the middle.

In a moment I was at the side of the little sufferer. He was a fine little boy about five years

old. His head was twisted to one side by a growth on his neck; and he moaned in his agony. The mother told me that he had had nothing to eat but milk for two weeks. The boy was in a sorry plight. I asked leave to have the bandages removed, and the dirty poultices washed away so that I might see what was the matter. Though not trained in medicine, it did not take me long to see that the poor little chap was suffering from blind boils, and that they needed lancing at once.

‘Why don’t you have a doctor?’ I asked.

‘A doctor,’ said the poor mother with a sigh; ‘we’ve no money.’

‘Doctors charge a dollar a mile to come out here,’ explained my guide, ‘and it’s twenty miles.’

Twenty dollars a trip, I thought; and then at the remembrance of the roads, I involuntarily added, ‘Well, it is worth it, if they ever get it.’

‘Well, then,’ I again asked, ‘why don’t you take him to the doctor?’

‘We’ve no way to take him,’ pleaded the mother.

No horse, not even an ox had they. How they lived, and worked the place, I do not know.

‘Can you not get a friend to take him in for you?’

‘But I cannot get him out to the nearest neighbour’s. Then none of them have any rig to take the likes o’ him in.’

‘Well,’ I said, as I again carefully examined the boy, ‘it is a desperate shame to see the little fellow suffering. I know what is the matter, I think; and I’ll tell you what I will do. I never did anything

like it before; but the boils want lancing, and if you will take all responsibility, I shall do my best for him.'

'Oh,' said the mother, 'I am sure you will do it all right.'

I told her not to be too confident, and then asked her to get some warm water and old cloths ready. I took out my jack-knife, sharpened the little blade on my boot, and then bared the boy for the operation.

The boil on the neck frightened me, for the veins and arteries were pressed out prominently, and spread in a thick network over the sore. To lance this would be exceedingly risky. But farther down, on the chest, was another boil, apparently an overflow of the one on the neck. This, like the one on the neck, was as hard as a rock, but it showed no blood vessels. I reasoned that to lance this one might be enough, and the one on the neck might be eased, if not worked away through it.

I lanced the one on the breast, and let out the putrid pus. My calculations proved correct, for the hardness of the one on the neck yielded, and by gentle pressure, gave way, and the little fellow was able to straighten his head. Then he began to cry. I knew then that he was relieved. To hear the boy cry was a great advance upon his pitiful moaning.

I told his mother to get him a bowl of bread and milk. I stayed a few minutes longer, and ere I left I saw him peacefully enjoying his bread and milk. I told Mrs. Smith to keep Freddy clean,

that I would send him some medicine to cleanse his blood, and he would soon be around again.

I was exceedingly anxious to know whether I had done the right thing. So upon my return home I wrote to my old trusted physician in the city. His reply was prompt with words of commendation, and with a prescription which I had made up by the village chemist, at the cost of one dollar. This I took out to Freddy, making my 'patient' another visit.

I found him doing finely and clamouring to be out. I advised great caution, as he was weak and tender after his long confinement, and would be very susceptible to catching cold.

The medicine acted like a charm, and in a short time Freddy was out playing with his brothers and sisters, and, as far as looks were concerned, was the cleanest and healthiest of the lot.

But the transformation in Freddy was as nothing when compared to the change in the treatment I received at the hands of the people. I was now a man of reputation; for it was noised abroad that I had cured Freddy Smith, that I was not after money, because I had bought and paid for a bottle of medicine for him, that I had paid him two visits, and with this item in my inventory of good deeds, the people always added significantly, 'and you know a doctor's fee is twenty dollars, and extra for medicine.'

'Why,' they said, 'he has done it all, and never even said a word about money. What does it mean?'

The next time preaching service was held at the school-house, the place was packed. Even the good woman who told me of bears and wolves, and blazes, left her potato patch to come and hear the man who had cured Freddy Smith, and whom she called 'the gentleman.'

The thing almost overwhelmed me, for the people thought I had healed Freddy because I was a 'B.A.' I could do anything, and knew everything worth knowing. So they came to me with all their ills and difficulties, and I was consulted on matters as different as a toothache and a dispute about improperly surveyed land.

After this I not only had the pleasure of having good-sized, attentive audiences at the Sunday services, but the deeper satisfaction of seeing many rough hearts mellowed, despairing hopes revived, and sad lives sweetened by the truths of the Gospel.

When my year was up, and I was called by the Church authorities to another place, I had many a token of affection that filled my heart with thanksgiving that I had the grace to 'condescend to men of low estate.' The people acted as though burdened with a sense of penitence at the thought of misjudging a good friend; and also as if they felt themselves under a great debt of obligation to a benefactor. They also seemed to feel their inability to make any attempt towards securing an adequate reward, and so they avoided anything but personal expressions of affection.

However, ere I left the village on the train,

a couple of the women of that out-appointment came down (walked in, I believe) to bid me farewell. There was a shyness in their actions and a light in their eyes that I had never seen before. As I was saying my final farewell, ere I boarded the train, one of them handed me an envelope. There was no time to examine it, only to thank them heartily, and to swing on the train.

Inside the car I examined my envelope. My name was badly written, so was the letter, but its words deeply touched my heart, for the letter said—

‘Dear Friend, we love you because you loved us. We want to thank you, but we can’t. There is twenty-two dollars and forty-one cents in here. Will you please accept from us? We hope you will have as much pleasure in spending it as we have in giving it. All the neighbours join us and send their wishes that God will go with you and bless you.’

Is it any wonder that my head went down, and my heart was strangely warmed; for who can tell what perseverance, economy, and love were exercised to make up that amount in that lonely, poverty-stricken place?

XIII

WORTHY OF HIS HIRE

IT was late in the afternoon when Mr. Hewitt entered Bracebridge. He had had a long and tedious drive over the rough Muskoka roads, and both he and his horse were ready for a rest. Mr. Hewitt was on his way to Gravenhurst to meet the other ministers and missionaries of the district, to report the work that had been done, and to discuss plans for the future. He could have driven to Gravenhurst that evening, but decided to have a rest. Turning off the main street, he drove up to the British Lion Hotel. He handed his horse over to the ostler, had a good wash, and ordered supper. After he had eaten his meal, he went out for a stroll through the town, which is one of the most romantic on the continent and has many sights to interest the visitor. The spring had swollen the beautiful river, so that it was now a rushing torrent, and the grandeur of the waterfall was greatly increased. The log-chute, beside the falls, was of particular interest to Mr. Hewitt, as it showed him another chapter in the history of many a log which he had seen taken from its

native haunts. He met his brother minister of the place, Mr. Roper, and had a short chat with him. Then, after an hour's outing, he returned to his hotel.

He was met at the door by the clerk, who told him that a man had been there to see him, and that he would be back again in half an hour. Within that time a rather thin but fine-looking young man came.

'Mr. Hewitt, I believe. My name is Roland Montague,' he said, introducing himself. 'You will perhaps have forgotten me, but I shall never forget you. I was a scaler in Goldsmith's camp, which you visited so faithfully. I'll tell you more of that by-and-by. I want you to come and accept our hospitality. I saw Mr. Roper, and he told me that you had driven into town and that you were likely here.'

'It is very kind of you, but I have a horse and it is put away. It will be too much trouble to bother now.'

'It will be no bother. Pack your grip and I'll see that the horse is harnessed.'

'It is very kind of you,' Mr. Hewitt managed to say ere his friend turned and was out of the back door of the hotel. Looking after him Mr. Hewitt puzzled himself to know which one of the hundred men in Goldsmith's camp this fine hearty fellow could be. He, however, looked after his grip and, finding the clerk, told him that his friend had come to take him away. On asking the clerk for his bill, the clerk replied—

'Oh, that will be all right. Mr. Montague will settle it.'

'Excuse me,' said Mr. Hewitt. 'I pay my own bills whenever I can. How much do I owe you for self and horse?'

'Thirty-five cents,' replied the clerk.

After paying his bill, Mr. Hewitt went out into the yard, and found that his new friend and the ostler were just finishing the work of hitching the horse to the buggy. Picking up the reins Roland told the preacher to jump in, and that he would drive him home.

Turning to the clerk as they drove by the door, Mr. Montague said—

'Charge Mr. Hewitt's bill to me, Holmes, and I'll settle with you.'

'He's beaten you there, Montague,' shouted back the clerk.

'You shouldn't have done that,' said Roland to Mr. Hewitt.

'But I should pay my own bills, shouldn't I?' said the young preacher.

'That is so,' assented Roland. 'But while you are in Bracebridge, I wish you to consider yourself my guest.'

Mr. Hewitt was now in a still greater wonder to know who this young man was. Roland noticed the inquiring look on Mr. Hewitt's face.

'You surely haven't forgotten the accident at Goldsmith's camp, have you?'

Mr. Hewitt turned sharply in his seat, seized

Montague by the shoulder, and turned him partly round.

‘You are not the Rolly Montague who was hurt, are you?’ he asked, with some surprise.

‘I am the man,’ replied Roland; ‘and a thousand thanks to you that I am here.’

‘But you have become very thin. You were a fat, robust fellow at camp.’

‘Yes, it was a long struggle back to health, but you gave me a good start.’

A short drive across the town and across the bridge brought them to Roland’s home. They drove up the lane, passed a very neat brick house, and went on to the stable. He would have sent Mr. Hewitt into the house, but the preacher insisted upon helping him put the horse away. Then they entered the house. When Roland told his mother who the young preacher was, she received Mr. Hewitt very cordially and did what she could to make him feel at home. Just then a man came in great haste for Roland. After receiving the message he excused himself, and was leaving when his father came in. He briefly introduced Mr. Hewitt to him as a young preacher who had come to visit him, and then he was off with the messenger.

Mr. Montague was a rough-and-ready man, one who had been knocked about in the rougher and ruder days of Muskoka. He was able to hold his own with all comers. Consequently he had made his way and had accumulated considerable wealth. He was apt, however, to tell people what he thought of them and their class. For preachers

he apparently had no particular liking. This was chiefly due to the practical working of his mind, as well as the fact that he had not been able to see any immediate cash return coming to the country from their labours.

After leading the way to the parlour, he seated himself and bade the young preacher take a chair.

'So ye'r a preacher, hey?' remarked the old gentleman.

'Yes, I'm a preacher,' replied Mr. Hewitt, gravely.

'Got a horse, I suppose?' continued Mr. Montague.

'Yes, I have a horse,' was the half-amused reply.

'Ha, ha!' laughed the old man to himself. This was a sign to the enemy to beware, but Mr. Hewitt was ignorant of an intended assault and so was unprepared.

'Ye're just like the rest of them preachers, them drive-around-in-yer-buggy missionaries. Ye just come around a-spongin' for yer grub, and yer horses eats up the hard-growed oats of the poor settlers. Ye're slick chaps, a livin' on the fat of the land. Ye're a poor lot of preachin' parasites, anyway, ha, ha!'

Mr. Hewitt was indignant. He managed to keep his seat during most of this speech because he remembered his efforts to help Roland try to become a Christian, but at the word 'parasites,' he was stung and sprang to his feet.

'Excuse me, Mr. Montague,' he said. 'I'll trouble

you for my hat and coat. I did not come here to be insulted.'

'Oh, sit down, young fellow. Ye're in here now and ye might as well stay. Rolly is a little struck on preachers just now, and he'd take it hard if you'd a-went and not seed him.'

'I cannot stay,' said Mr. Hewitt, 'while you call in question the manliness, let alone the Christian honesty, of our ministers.'

'Well,' drawled out the old man, 'I was only a-speakin' generally.'

'I do not like this speaking of things generally,' replied Mr. Hewitt. 'Tell me of one man in our ministry who goes sponging upon the people.'

'Why,' said the old man with a chuckle, 'you're here to-day.'

'Do I owe you anything?' asked Mr. Hewitt.

'No; ye ain't been here long enough.'

'Does any preacher owe you anything?'

'Well, they'se had many a meal and many a mess of oats out of me.'

'Did they ever leave you thinking any better of your neighbours?' asked Mr. Hewitt, looking the old man directly in the eyes.

The old man's eyes dropped. He scratched his head for a moment.

'Why—why, yes,' he said. 'Come to think just now how Mr. Rogers patched up a quarrel 'tween me and old Jones yonder. Him and me's had many a deal since,' he added with a gleam of delight.

'Did you pay Mr. Rogers any percentage of your profits?'

'Why, no,' replied Mr. Montague, rather astonished at the idea.

'Did any minister ever comfort you in times of sorrow, or bury your dead?'

'Yes,' said the old man. His head went down, and he added, in a softer tone, 'That was when poor little Lizzie died. My, but the minister and his sweet wife—she was real sweet and pretty—bless her, and was so kind in them days.' He paused a moment, and then concluded, with emphasis, 'Regular angels they were.'

'Did any minister ever marry you or any of your children?'

'Yes, they did. Do you think we're heathens?' said the old man, rather shortly.

'Did any minister ever cheer you when you were despairing? Did any of them ever put good thoughts into your head, or set any ideals before you?'

'Why, yes, young fellow. That's what they come for.'

'Did any of them ever gather your family around them and point them to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the Saviour?'

'See here, young man,' said Mr. Montague, shifting in his chair. 'I'm not goin' to be preached to.'

'Why?' said Mrs. Montague, entering the room. 'What's this? Will you not be seated, Mr. Hewitt? Roland will be back in a very little while.'

'Thank you,' said Mr. Hewitt, as he quietly resumed his seat. 'Mr. Montague roused the preacher in me, and set me on my defence.'

'Father has some strange notions, especially about preachers,' said Mrs. Montague, apologetically, 'but he likes to see them just the same. And he ought to like you.'

'How's that?' demanded Mr. Montague.

'Why, father, don't you know? This is the gentleman that saved Roland's life.'

'You don't say!' said the old man, opening his eyes.

'It was hardly that, Mrs. Montague,' said Mr. Hewitt, deprecatingly.

'Oh yes, it was,' said Mrs. Montague, 'and you did more good, perhaps, than you know. Roland is so changed.'

'So he is, so he is,' interjected Mr. Montague. 'He was a lad before he went into the camp. Came home in them days regular drunk.'

'Oh, don't talk about it,' said Mrs. Montague, throwing her apron over her face.

'Well, it's true,' persisted the old man. 'He was a terror, and he could fight like an old she-bear. Had to bail him out regular.'

'Thank God,' said the mother, 'that's all over now, and, under God, Roland says it was you. Here comes Roland now, and we'll ask him.'

Roland came into the room, as he swung off his coat.

'Sorry that I've been away so long,' said he. 'One of my old cronies, Jim Edwards, got into a quarrel down town with another drunken fellow. One had a knife, and the other an empty bottle. Jim broke the other fellow's nose with the bottle,

but the other fellow has slashed Jim badly with the knife. Poor Jim has been very mad at me lately, because I would not go and drink with him as I used to do. When I told him that he ought to change like I did, he cursed me up and down the town. But they say that, as soon as the fight was over and he realized his great danger, he called for me. After the doctors are through with him, I'll take you down to see him, Mr. Hewitt. You helped one poor sinner out of the ditch, and you can help another.'

'Pass the good work on, Roland,' said Mr. Hewitt.

'God help me, I will,' replied Roland. 'But do you know that I might have been the fellow who fought Jim if I hadn't met you? How kind you were to me! May God reward you. I never can.'

'What did he do?' asked the father. 'You've never told me.'

'I've started to a dozen times, but you always said it was like a Bible story, or a sermon, and you wouldn't listen,' replied Roland, laughingly.

'Well, go ahead now,' said the father.

'You will tire Mr. Hewitt,' protested the mother.

'His mind needs refreshing on this story,' replied Roland, 'and he can bear it. I was scaling logs for Goldsmith, when a tree fell on a team of horses, and they ran away. I was ahead of them in the bush road and tried to stop them, but failing, I stepped in the snow at the roadside. As the horses

went flying by, the sled slued against me, and a cant-hook, which had caught in the fore part of the sled, caught me, ripped an awful gash, and, my clothes holding, it dragged me. I was banged senseless in no time. Mr. Hewitt was riding in to visit the camp. He saw the runaway horses and the man dragging at the side of the broken sled. Turning his horse broadside in the narrow road, he forced the runaways into the snow and stopped them.'

'Bully for him,' exclaimed the old man.

'But that was just the beginning. He soon tied the horses to a tree, and had me off the hook. Other fellows came rushing to help. He brought me back to consciousness, and they carried me to the camp. They took my clothes off, and saw what a tear the cant-hook had made. Some of the fellows were horrified when they saw me, and declared that my end had come, but Mr. Hewitt washed me, put the sides of the skin together, and, with some silk thread and a needle, which the cook happened to have, he put in ten stitches. He did his work so well that the doctors in the hospital didn't have to do it over again. He took his own white shirt off and tore it into bandages. It was some time before they could get a sled to bring me down, but he stayed with me, waited on me, and talked to me so kindly. I swore at my luck, and did lots of things that I am sorry for now, but he was patient.'

'Yes, and sarcastic, telling you that the devil wouldn't answer any of your calls for help, no

matter how hard and long and often you called to him,' put in Mr. Hewitt.

'Yes, but you also told me of One Who would hear, and, thank God, I listened, and Christ has put a new spirit in me. You stayed with me, talked with me, soothed the raging fever, sang to me, nursed me, and then helped them to take me to Burks' Falls, where they put me on the train and sent me home.'

'He did!' exclaimed the father. 'Then I'll never say a word against preachers no more.'

'I hope you haven't here,' said Roland, with sudden suspicion. He looked at Mr. Hewitt, whose eyes dropped and whose face turned deep crimson. The colour came mostly as he thought of his hasty determination to depart. Roland then looked at his father. The old man returned the gaze doggedly.

'Rolly,' he asked, 'do you mind a preacher bein' here by the name of Rogers?'

'Yes, I do. Why?'

'Why? 'Cause I been calcalatin' that I owe him a hundred dollars on those Jones' deals. Then there's old Millikin, what married your ma and me. I paid him the fee in oats; wish I could give him some cash. Then there's preacher Johnson, what walked the bank with me when I thought I was goin' crazy, when the dam was washed away. I was nigh to jumpin' in, too, but he said, "There was Scriptur to this, tho' the bird might be different to the Scriptur-writer's idee." "How's that?" says I. "Well," says he, "the Scriptur says 'riches takes wings to itself and flies away.' I



HE FORCED THE RUNAWAYS INTO THE SNOW AND STOPPED THEM.

guess your bird must have been a duck or a loon." I tell ye I owe that man somethin' for keepin' the sense of life in me. And then there's that preacher, Mr. Moore—you 'member him, ma. He was so kind when our Lizzie went under. How he waited on her, and she did like him. Lizzie, sweet little bird! Say, ma, for her sake let's make up a little reminder and send it to the Moores.'

'Why, pa,' said Mrs. Montague, 'whatever's got into you?'

'Never you mind now, just do as I say, and you will feel the better for it yourself.'

'So ministers are not so useless after all?' Mr. Hewitt could not refrain from interjecting.

'Don't you never say that again to me,' said the old man, fiercely. 'You just belong to this family for what you done to Rolly. And, ma, you get some new white shirts for him, for the one he tore up. Now, don't you forget.'

Roland looked at his watch and whispered to Mr. Hewitt. The young men arose together.

'Where are you young fellows a-goin' this hour of the night?' asked Mr. Montague.

'Going to pray with poor Jim,' said Roland.

'Well, won't you pray with your poor dad first?'

'Why, of course, father. I've wanted you to establish family prayers often enough?' replied Roland.

'Well, begin now,' was the sententious command.

Roland got his Bible. Mr. Hewitt conducted

evening worship. Then, as the young men were leaving on their errand of mercy, Mr. Montague slipped a roll of bills into Mr. Hewitt's hand, whispering to him—

‘You may need to get something for Jim?’

XIV

THE WHITE HANDKERCHIEF

IN the outskirts of Toronto a few years ago I became acquainted with Thomas Milne, an energetic gardener. He had a charming little wife and three sturdy boys. They lived in a neat brick house, a house erected and furnished by their own industry and self-sacrifice in times none too prosperous.

The last extension of the city had embraced his garden. Land speculators visited him, induced him to divide his property into building lots, and sold some for him. Milne thought he was in a fair way of becoming a rich man. His wife clung closely to him, and warned him against becoming involved, and pled with him to keep the house free; but, in the midst of the boom, men, especially those so situated as Milne, did not heed words of warning. Property rose to enormous prices, and buildings were being erected everywhere. Then the demand for houses suddenly ceased, the boom broke, and the castles of wealth came tumbling down around the shoulders of hundreds of men, and among these was Thomas Milne.

The day he learned that his affairs were shaking, he went from agent to contractor, from lawyer to money-lender, and back to the land agent again. His ruin was complete. Even the house that he had erected with so much effort to shelter his wife and boys was involved in the wreck.

Tired from his tramping, and sick at heart, he wended his way home. Entering his house quietly, he went into the little parlour, where one light was dimly burning, and flung himself into a chair. He remained there some time before he was noticed.

Walking hastily in for something his wife suddenly stopped and stepped back, startled.

'Why, Tom!' she exclaimed, 'you frightened me. I did not know that you were home. Are you sick, dear?' she added quickly, noticing his dejected attitude.

'Not sick, but undone.'

'What? Have you lost your money?'

'And property, too!'

She divined the whole in an instant. With a gentle caress on her husband's arm she left him.

'Walter,' she called, a little louder than was her wont to speak, 'turn up the parlour light and make a fire in the grate.'

'Albert, bring me some kindling for the kitchen stove.'

While she was talking the little woman busied herself, now in the parlour, with a cheerful word of encouragement to Walter, and again out in the kitchen with Albert. She made a cup of tea, and

with bread and butter she tripped again into the parlour.

'Here, Tom, you must be hungry after your tramp. This is some of my new bread. Eat some of it, like a good fellow. Isn't it sweet? This tea is of good flavour. You do not often choose a good brand, but you did that time. Let me give you another cup?'

The man drank his tea and ate his bread with much effort. He did not wish to be unkind, but he seemed unable to be himself. His wife's attention and cheerfulness had not roused him, though he bravely tried to respond to her spirit.

After the second cup of tea, Mrs. Milne drew a chair beside him. Walter's fire burned cheerily in the grate; the light and warmth were inspiring.

'Now, Tom,' said Mrs. Milne, 'tell us all about it.'

'I have told you all. It is all gone to smash. It is all my fault. Here you and I have slaved for years, bought and paid for our garden, and built this snug little home, and now it's gone up in the boom.'

The strong man buried his face in his hands.

'You are sure it is all gone, are you?'

'Yes, Minnie, it is all gone. Lawyer St. Clair said that nothing was ours, except what might be in your own right.'

'Well, Tom, it didn't take long to go;' and Mrs. Milne laughed a merry laugh.

Milne looked at her with a startled questioning

look. The shock had been bad enough for him, but had it been too much for her?

She saw the look and laughed again. 'So the property is all gone,' she said.

'It is all gone,' he repeated. 'I have brought the ruin on you and the boys, and at any time we may be turned out upon the road—beggars. There is nothing left—nothing!' His tone was self-incriminating and bitter.

'Tom,' said the good wife, her tone suddenly changing, 'please do not say that again. Something is left. You are left. I am left. I did not marry you for your money. Neither of us had any then.' And again she laughed a sweet little laugh. 'But, Tom, we loved each other, and we love each other a great deal more now. So that is left. And then you are strong, and I am strong again, thank God. That is left. And then, bless their hearts, there are the boys, all brave and healthy, real manly fellows. And when we look up, Tom, what shall we say? God has not taken His grace from our lives nor His love from our hearts. I have faith in Him still, and I love Him, and so do you, Tom. We have Him, you said so just last Sunday. Why, my boy, we're wealthy yet!'

The man sprang out of his chair, and took his wife in his arms.

'Minnie,' he said, looking intently into her eyes, 'Minnie, tell me truly. Do you really feel that way?'

'I wouldn't say so if I didn't,' she replied, with a saucy toss of her head.

He drew her to his heart, and after a warm embrace he kissed her.

* * * * *

Five years later I met them in Muskoka. Milne had obtained a free grant of land from the Ontario Government. He had built himself a good log house, and was living very happily with his family around him. They had found it hard work at first, but by skilful management they made the forest, lake, and land yield them a goodly harvest, and they were again surrounded with many things, such as a team of horses, some cattle, and a good flock of sheep, which betokened the blessings of returning prosperity.

'Tom's all right,' said McGregor, a neighbouring settler, 'but he's kind of soft like. He and his missus are much struck on each other. He never leaves but she puts a white handkerchief—a white 'un, mind ye—round his neck ere he comes out, and he kisses her. Some men 'ud wear a red handkerchief, or perhaps 'ud do so till they got out of sight of their missus, and then take it off and put it into their pocket. But Tom! No, sur, he'd wear his white 'un through a loggin' bee or barn raisin' and all the guyin' of the boys.'

I found it as McGregor had said. Milne, ere he left his home, had his white handkerchief tied on and gave in return a morning kiss. The manly manner of the man and his reverence for his wife were touching and instructive to the neighbours. Some of the women laughed outwardly at 'the white handkerchief nonsense of the Milnes,' as they

called it, but they inwardly longed for similar affectionate treatment from their husbands.

The following hunting season I was deeply pained to hear from McGregor that the token of love, Mrs. Milne's white handkerchief, had been the means of her husband's death.

A large party of hunters, settlers, and some visitors from the city, had gone to the bush. In their instructions the new men had been told to shoot the deer right behind the shoulder, if on the side; or, in front, to aim at the white spot on the neck. The party were then allotted their several positions, and proceeded to take their stations.

Milne was slowly making his way to his place, when he heard a noise in the bush, and, thinking it was a deer or some other animal, he crouched to the ground and cautiously moved round the bushes to see the cause.

The report of a rifle was heard, and Milne rolled over, dying almost instantly.

Several hunters ran in the direction of the shot, hoping that one of their number had killed a deer. To the horror of all, they found that the victim was one of their party. The man who had fired the shot said that he must have got out of his place in the forest. He saw something moving in the bush, he watched a moment, and, seeing the white, thought that it was the white throat of a deer. He fired. The ball had sped on its errand too truly. Right through the handkerchief the ball had gone, into the man's neck and lungs.

He was tenderly carried home, and what

consolation and sympathy were possible were heartily extended. But the shock was severe.

I visited Mrs. Milne shortly afterward. The boys seemed to have suddenly become men. Mrs. Milne's ways were quieter. The merry ripples of her face were softened away, and though she smiled bravely, for the sake of her boys, the chief earthly object of her love had passed within the veil.

When I spoke of his death to her, the white handkerchief was referred to. With a smile, a smile of such sweetness, confidence, and love, such as I may never see again, she said—

'Twas love made me put it on, and 'twas love made him wear it. Love gave him twice to me, and love has now taken him. I leave it all in the hands of the God of love.'

XV

A FINE STORY

THERE were about fifty men in Johnson's lumber camp, thirty miles east of Brushy. Among them was a bright-faced young shantyman by the name of Jake Brown. Jake was one of those happy-tempered fellows who are welcomed everywhere, but especially at the camps. Here the men are worked hard, and are jostled together in such a way that their tempers are severely tried, and so good nature is always at a premium.

Jake was an exception in this camp, as he was the only one when Sunday came around to take up his Bible and read it. In fact, his was the only Bible in the camp as far as I knew, for if there were any others they were kept by the men in their 'turkeys,' or bags, and never saw the light while in the camp. When Sunday came round some of the men would spend the day sleeping, but most of them spent it in playing cards and gambling for tobacco. A few of the men would hunt around and find any newspaper that might have been brought in by the 'cadger' that brings

in the supplies. They would take the papers into the shanty, draw their benches up to the stove, light their pipes, and begin. But lumbermen are not great readers, and in a few minutes the eyes of the reader close, the hand relaxes its hold, and the paper drops to the floor. In his love for the pipe, I believe, the shantyman wishes that he could smoke while he is asleep. However, it is the last thing that he lets go; but soon the shantyman ceases even his smoking and is off into a deep sleep.

Jake, as I said, was an exception in the camp; he was so in many ways. He not only had a Bible, but he read it, and then he didn't swear or use tobacco. This latter oddity caused him to be 'jibed' and 'codded' by his companions more than anything else. Shantymen don't seem to mind a man being 'religious,' that is, for a man to say his prayers and read his Bible, as long as he smokes, and as long as he does not obtrude his religion on his fellows.

Jake's happy way of turning the 'cods' about his 'weakness' in not using tobacco had satisfied the men that he was 'a jolly good fellow,' and had insured his peace to pursue his Bible study and other private devotions. These Jake did with regularity and faithfulness.

He knew his companions well enough to know that any endeavour on his part to force religion on them would only meet with opposition and perhaps discharge by the foreman for raising a row. So he prayed for his companions, and devoted most

of his Sunday to reading, and meditation, and resting his body for the week's work that was before him.

Among Jake's companions was a German, Fritz Hoffman. Fritz, in the camp, was a very industrious, hard-working fellow, but when he had the chance, like too many of his comrades, he indulged too freely in liquor and in other ways maltreated his body. Fritz was the son of an early German settler and was very ignorant. He had never gone to school, but had picked up enough English to talk it fairly well and to be able to read a little. From his first acquaintance he became attached to Jake, and had found his companionship very acceptable and pleasant.

One Sunday, after watching a game of cards, Fritz looked up and noticed Jake sitting on a bench by the window intently reading a book. He walked over, touched him on the shoulder, and said pleasantly—

‘Vot you reading so much, Shake?’

‘A fine story, Fritz,’ said Jake.

‘I likes fine stories; read him out,’ said Fritz.

‘But we will disturb the other chaps,’ said Jake.

‘Ve go out by shtofe in eadin’ house. Cook von’t mind,’ persisted Fritz.

‘All right, Fritz. I’ll go out and read the story to you in the dining-room beside the stove.’

The cook and his assistant were stretched out on benches, taking their after-dinner nap.

Jake and Fritz drew a bench up to the stove, and Jake made ready to read, when Fritz said—

'Don't read it ofer. Just tell me quick vat you haf read.'

'All right, Fritz. The story is about One who lived in Palestine, away east. He loved everybody and went about doing good. He had wonderful power to heal diseases. He seems to have been a first-class doctor, better than Dr. Schmidt, who cured you when you had the smallpox.'

'He must be a goot one, den. Dr. Schmidt was a goot one,' put in Fritz.

'Yes,' said Jake, 'He cured many kinds of diseases; and not only that, but He taught them lots of things that were for their good. And for all the good He did, they only persecuted Him and drove Him about the country. He had a few friends, but they did not help Him very much.'

'Vot!' exclaimed Fritz, 'didn't dose He cur't help Him? Didn't they pay Him? Didn't they lofe Him? Vi, I had to pay Dr. Schmidt dwenty-five dollars fur curing me. It was sheap, very sheap, and I lofe him. He was so kint doctor.'

'Well, Fritz,' said Jake, 'I am just reading how these people paid this wonderful Teacher and Doctor, who not only told them good things, but healed all their diseases. Just listen!'

And Jake began again the eighteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which he had nearly finished when Fritz came to him beside the window.

Fritz, who at first had been inclined to talk and uphold the reputation of Dr. Schmidt, now forgot to talk, and became absorbed in what Jake was reading.

Jake could not read any too well, but as he wanted Fritz to understand the meaning, he read more slowly than he otherwise would. He had barely finished the nineteenth chapter when the cook awoke and said that he wanted to get their suppers ready, so Jake and Fritz had to go back to the sleeping quarters.

During the week Fritz was much quieter than usual, and when the next Sunday came round, he came to Jake and asked him if he was going to have a sleep during the day. Jake said that he hoped to some time, as he felt very tired, but wanted to know why Fritz had asked such a question.

‘Vell,’ said Fritz, ‘I like to reat some more dat fine story. I don’t vant to bodder you. I thought you lent me your book vile you shleep.’

Jake’s eyes suddenly turned upward; a tear was barely restrained, and a prayer of thanksgiving went into the presence of the heavenly Father. With some choking he said—

‘You can have it and welcome, Fritz. I shall lie down in my bunk and have a sleep now, then you can let me have the book after dinner.’

Fritz’s eyes sparkled his thanks long before his lips uttered the words. With eagerness he took the book, and was soon by the window absorbed in its contents.

Jake lay down, but not to sleep, for he was full of prayer that God might thoroughly arouse Fritz and let him know Jesus Christ, the great Physician, as his Saviour.

Several Sundays passed this way. Jake rested

in the morning and read his Bible in the afternoon, while Fritz read in the morning and rested in the afternoon.

One day there came a preacher to the camp. He was a stout young fellow, and had walked about twenty-five miles on snowshoes to get to the camp.

The foreman was not any too glad to see him, for he thought he would take some of the men's time away from their work; but he treated the young preacher fairly well.

After the supper the men were called into the kitchen dining-room, and a service was held. The text was that wonderful prophecy of our Lord's sufferings, Isa. liii. 5, 6. The sermon was not over eloquent, but it was an excellent statement of plain Gospel truth, pointing out the sufferings of Christ, and how He, the guiltless, made atonement for us, the guilty.

The best attention was given to the service, and many memories of happier, holier days were recalled by many of the men as they joined in the sweet songs of Zion that were sung.

After service was over the men all left the room for their sleeping bunks, except Jake and Fritz.

Jake came up and shook hands with the young preacher, thanking him for his earnest address. But Fritz had not left his bench. He was there with his head bowed between his knees, and hands over his head.

While speaking to the preacher, Jake for the

first time during the evening noticed Fritz. He turned to the young preacher and said—

‘Come over with me and speak to this man. He seems to be aroused about his soul.’

With much tenderness in his words, Jake asked—

‘What is the matter, Fritz?’

‘Oh, Shake, oh, you nefer haf tolt me dat dat Doctor in story haf died to saf me,’ Fritz responded, not daring to look up.

‘But the book told you so, did it not?’ said Jake.

‘Ya, ya; put I not understand oder pelief.’

‘Well, do you understand it now?’ asked Jake.

‘Ya, ya,’ said Fritz; ‘put I bin worser as you tink. I don’t pelief Christ can cure me.’

‘I don’t know about that,’ said Jake. ‘You read how Jesus healed a leper, and that is a great deal worse than the smallpox.’

‘But, my dear fellow,’ said the young preacher, ‘though we are ever so sick, or have wandered ever so far away, Christ has promised to heal all our diseases and bring us back to Himself again. Don’t you see, “He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all”? Just leave your sins with Jesus, and say after me, “He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon Him; and with His stripes I am healed.”’

Fritz followed. The truth came into his soul. Then came a flood of joyful tears, and between them he exclaimed—

'How kint, how kint! I nefer so happy, not efen ven Dr. Schmidt cur't me mit de smallpox.'

Then three happy men knelt down in that rude, rough log shanty and returned their heartfelt thanks to God that another wandering sheep had returned to the fold, and that Christ might see again a satisfaction for the 'travail of His soul.'

Jake thanked the preacher again for coming and awakening the soul of his friend; the preacher said that Jake deserved the greater credit for preparing the ground and leading him to the light; but Fritz was praising the Great Physician about Whom he had read in the 'fine story.'

XVI

GORDON ROBERTS: A STUDENT VOLUNTEER

I SADDLED my horse and took the ride, about forty miles, to see my friend. Ere evening closed, I rode into the hamlet where Gordon, now Dr. Gordon Roberts, was practising. With the heartiness of a college boy, for it was not more than two years since his graduation, he received me and took me to the hotel, which was his lodging-house, and in which he had his consultation office. After tea, he was called upon to attend a young lumberman who had been brought in by his comrades with a broken leg. The man was out chopping, and, as a tree fell, it was caught by the limb of a neighbouring tree, which swung it on the labourer ere he could get out of its way. With care the limb was set. Then a message came of sickness in a log home, two miles out of that backwoods hamlet. Gordon thought that I had better rest after my ride, but I persisted, and accompanied him to see his patient. The house was found, the patient was ministered to, and we started on the homeward journey.

It was a glorious night. The moon rode the sky in silvery splendour, and the stars seemed to twinkle and sing of her triumphant march. The tinted trees, the shining lakes and rippling streams played in her beams, and sent back their thanks from glistening, dew-covered leaves and laughing wavelets.

I was drinking in this beautiful vision when Gordon abruptly said—

‘I’m filled with despair. Let us sit down here on this stone. I want to tell you something. You are the only one around here that loves me. Well, now, what’s the use of telling you? You, too, may hate me.’

‘I hate no one. And why should I hate you, Gordon?’

‘Why, I hate myself! I’ve no peace, no rest, no love, no hope.’

‘Poor boy, you’re lonely out here. Melancholia is affecting you. Come, let’s have a race down the road. How lovely the moonlight glistens!’

‘No, let me tell you all. It may drive you from me, but it will ease my conscience to tell it to some one. I was once as happy in the love and favour of God as any one; but since I have come here, my heart has been hard against Him, and I could almost curse Him; but He was my kind Father once, and He was my mother’s God; and I couldn’t. I loved Him once, and my heart and life were filled with love and joy. I was then at college, attending the medical school. One day a missionary meeting was held at the college. A

noble man, right from the foreign field, was there. His earnest words sank deeply into my heart, and bore home the conviction that I should be a foreign missionary, and, if I did not, I should have no peace or rest. So I volunteered. When the consecration was made, a new life, full of unutterable glory, filled my soul. In my studies I made extraordinary progress, and, when I graduated, I was the gold medallist of my class, and—and I had found a friend who was dearer to me than all the world beside. Then came the struggle. Friends helped it on. Why should I, the gold medallist of my class, go to the foreign field? A grand career was opening up for me at home. Let commoner fellows go. Then, why should I leave my love? Stay, build up a great practice, and take her to myself. The struggle was terrible. My conscience and my honour pleaded for my vow. Self, world, and friends pleaded for ease, fame, and love. I yielded to the temptation, for I thought my love would not leave her happy home to go with me to the foreign field, and my heart said that I could not leave her behind. Then, oh, like a cloud my mind was darkened. My heart was midnight, and all my peace was gone. I lost relish for study; I became careless in life; my friends grew cold, and my sweetheart found greater pleasure in another's company. I became truly reckless, and tried to drown my feelings in carousals. When I received my license papers, I came out here to hide myself, to banish all thoughts of the past, and drown my love in work and drink. The liquor that is sold

here is so bad that I could not drink it. There has not been much to do. My conscience has been pricking and goading me, and I am almost driven to madness.'

'Come back to Christ. He will not cast you out.'

'But I cannot go back after the life I have lived. His people here have cast me out, and will not associate with me. Oh, don't say Christ to me!'

'But Christ means love and light, and you are sadly in need of both.'

'Well, I have told you all my feelings.' Don't you hate me?'

'Why, no; you're only a rebellious son. I don't like your wilfulness or the cruel way that you speak of Christ and His readiness to forgive the penitent. If you desire peace of conscience and God's favour, go to Him and tell Him how you feel. Plead Christ's dying love in your behalf. He never turns a deaf ear to that.'

'The moon is setting,' said Gordon, abruptly. 'We'll have to hurry to get home by its light.'

So we returned to the hotel. On the way he was quite bright, seemingly much relieved by his confession. I was heavy with prayerful thought. Ere I left that hamlet, I met the preacher in charge, and gave him some ideas about neglecting 'God's little ones'; but, like the cry of Ananias of Damascus, he said—

'He is one of the scoffers, one of the persecutors, and, moreover, his associates are of the hotel, and

you cannot expect me to associate with such as he.'

'Well, if you cannot meet him where he is, I shall try to send him to you; but do not miss an opportunity to help him.'

Gordon promised me to attend the services in the little church, and not to give up to despair. True to his promise, he attended the next church service, which was the prayer-meeting. After an earnest discourse, in which Christ's forgiving love and the necessity of our completely laying ourselves at His feet were emphasized, the preacher said—

'Let us pray. Dr. Roberts will lead us in prayer.'

A sensation passed through the audience. Some of the men smiled, others scowled; some of the girls giggled, and the sanctimonious sneered; but Gordon heeded them not, and surprised them all by kneeling down upon the rough, unpainted floor and pouring out his soul to God. His prayer was the cry of one in the wilderness for a straight path, the bleat of a lamb in the thicket longing to be set free, the wail of a captive that he might escape the house of bondage. In a fervour that quieted all, he ended—

'Lord, Thou knowest, Thou knowest; but make me good. For Jesus' sake. Amen.'

That prayer was the talk of the place for the next few days. The young preacher had often to defend his action for calling on 'such an one' to pray in the prayer-meeting.

'Did he say anything wrong?' he would answer; 'wasn't it to the point, a personal plea

for pardon? How touching was the plea: "Lord, Thou knowest, but make me good!"'

'But think of what he is, and with whom he associates!'

'Were Paul's actions and comrades any more commendable to the Church ere his conversion?'

'But could he be in earnest?'

'Could he pray with such fervour and not be in earnest?'

But the people were not convinced. They thought their pastor rash, and that the influence upon the people, especially the young people, would be harmful.

The pastor visited the doctor. They were two young men together. They prayed together in the doctor's office in the hotel and in the preacher's library in his boarding-house.

And ere Saturday night waned, a new light, a joyous experience, dawned upon the doctor.

'I yield, I yield!' was his happy statement to his pastor. 'I'll go back to the place where I was ere I lost my peace of mind. God helping me, I'll lay myself upon the altar and go wherever He will send me.'

'Tell us your experience, Sunday, in the church.'

The doctor shrank from the task.

'You owe it to the people, whose profession you have scoffed; you owe it to your companions, whose sinful ways you have exalted; but above all, you owe it to the Christ, your Saviour, Whom you have denied. He calls for your confession before men that He may confess you before His Father in heaven.'

'By God's help, I will. I am now determined to do His will as He makes it plain to me.'

The news had been quickly noised abroad that evening that the doctor was converted, that he had closed up his practice, and would leave for some foreign mission field the following week. It was also quickly known that he was going to make his confession the next day in the church. The church on Sabbath morning was consequently full to overflowing. With bowed head, flushed face, and tremulous voice, he began his story. He had a hard battle to make the church people believe that he was in earnest, but in spite of themselves, ere he was through, their eyes were bathed in tears; and even the rough-hearted lumbermen yielded to his fervent appeal, and many a vow was recorded, and sigh lifted for the holier, purer, conscience-quiet life. He followed up his discourse with a few days of personal visiting and earnest work; urging the undecided to decision for truth and confounding the cold-hearted and unbelieving. He presented himself to his own people and offered himself again to go into foreign work, but like the Jewish disciples with Saul of Tarsus, they did not accept his conversion as genuine.

However, he was ready to be humbled; for the sword of the Spirit had penetrated to the uttermost parts of his heart. He sought other Christians and other missionary societies till he succeeded in finding one who would send him if he would spend six months in their preparatory college, and

at the end of that time prove himself worthy. With thankful heart he accepted the offer, and with earnestness he prosecuted his studies, absorbing all that he thought would be useful and necessary to equip him most fully for active service in the front ranks of Christ's soldiers. When his term at college was up, he was most enthusiastically sent out to the foreign field, and from the latest reports the name of Dr. Gordon Roberts bids fair to shine upon the most illustrious pages of the honour roll of Christ's noble foreign missionaries.

XVII

AN EXCHANGE OF FISH

THE autumn sun lavished its light on the richly-coloured foliage of the forest trees of Muskoka, and bathed itself in the beautiful lakes of that highland region of Ontario. In the midst of the splendour lay Duck Lake, and on a rocky islet which rose from its bosom, sat an Indian. He had a short pole, some fish line and some poor-looking hooks, but he was frequently pulling up beautiful fish and tossing them into a birch-bark canoe which was near him. About a quarter of a mile away two men were paddling in a cedar canoe. As they came into view of the island from which the Indian was leisurely fishing, they saw him pull in a beautiful lake trout and were eager to partake of his luck, as white men generally partake of Indian's luck. So they paddled over to the island, pulled their boat up on the rocks, and went over to the Indian.

When the Indian saw these two white men approaching, he coolly pulled up his line, twisted it loosely around his pole, and stuck the hook into

the wood at the end. After laying the pole in his canoe he took his short pipe out of his vest pocket. Stirring the tobacco in the bowl with the blade of his jack-knife, he put in a little fresh tobacco and then lit it. He then took his gun out of his canoe and was apparently cleaning it when the two white men came over the rocky island to the place where he was seated.

'I thought I saw you fishing, Jonas?' said one of the men, a stout, ruddy, repulsive-looking man, whom Jonas, the Indian, recognized as Dodge, the owner of the Duck Lake Hotel.

'Ugh!' was Jonas's reply to Dodge's query.

'Had any luck?'

Dodge received a nod of the head in answer to his second question. He was stepping, with his comrade behind him, in between Jonas and his canoe, when Jonas's gun suddenly pointed his way. He quickly stepped back, and his action drew the immediate attention of his satellite, who also moved hastily backwards. Both men were evidently much annoyed. Jonas, however, did not look at all disturbed.

'We saw you fishing. Where's your line?' demanded Dodge.

'No business of yours,' said Jonas, without moving his head or pipe.

'Why don't you go on fishing?'

'Clean gun,' was the sententious reply, uttered with a twitching cheek-muscle which might be taken for a smile.

'Well, Dodge, I guess we had better get out

tackle and try our luck. Jonas won't show us anything to-day.'

So saying the taller man, called Lanky, walked apparently back to his canoe, while Dodge appeared on the farther side. This drew Jonas's attention away from Lanky and fastened it on Dodge. After wheedling over Jonas a while, Dodge relaxed all his blandishing advances and denounced him for being a warden's man and yet ashamed to let people see what he had in his canoe. Jonas only turned his attention to his gun.

Lanky was nimble, and while Dodge was haranguing Jonas he secured a number of his fish. Dodge chuckled at an especially fine haul, and this made Jonas aware that Lanky was not by his own canoe. Jonas shifted his position a little, and kept his eye and gun on both men, thus foiling all further efforts to secure his fish. Thus persistently baffled, the two retired.

As soon as their backs were turned, Jonas, quick as a flash, slipped his canoe into the water, stepped in, and in the sunset's glory upon the lake, a veritable pathway of gold, he quietly paddled away.

When the two white men turned and saw Jonas beyond their reach, they cursed the Indian and the fish he had taken away with him.

'Well, Dodge,' said Lanky, consolingly, 'we've got some fish and have chased the cur away. Shall I get supper?'

Dodge growled an assent.

After they had made a meal out of Jonas's fish,

Dodge got out his pipe and smoked himself into a snooze, while his companion sharpened up his fish-spear.

Jonas was surprised to see that Dodge had returned so soon to Duck Lake. Time had passed very pleasantly for him while the moose-poaching hotel-keeper was in jail. Still, the adventure of the afternoon showed him that Dodge was back, and that he was also up to his old tricks again. Jonas was very sorry that the warden had gone away, and he hoped that Dodge was not aware of the fact. But Dodge was aware of it, as his companion Lanky told him that he had seen him go away on the stage, though he could not find out when he was to return. The men had, however, thought to seize their opportunity to shoot a deer or spear some fish.

After leaving the white men, Jonas paddled across the lake, hid his canoe in the bushes, and strolled up to the school-house. He and the school-teacher had been establishing an intimate acquaintanceship. Jonas wanted to learn reading and writing, so that he might serve the warden and his king better. The school-teacher was threatened with lung trouble and wanted to gain health. He found Jonas an expert and interesting hunter, and his physicians had encouraged him in all outdoor sports. So the friendship grew with mutual advantage.

Jonas found his friend and with him visited some bear traps which they had set. None being caught to-day, they strolled over to see the young

preacher in his shack, or 'parsonage,' as they facetiously called it.

After supper the young men went down to the lake. Jonas's sharp eyes saw a glint of light that roused his suspicion. Was it the reflection in the water of a falling star? No, there it is again. It is slightly above the water. Jonas was convinced that some persons were out with a jack lantern spearing fish. This was illegal. Perhaps they were Dodge and Lanky. This suspicion reminded him of his adventure during the afternoon, and he told his friends. The school-teacher was eager for revenge.

'Jonas,' said the preacher, 'can't you round them up and get your fish back?'

'You help?' queried Jonas.

'Yes, certainly,' was the prompt reply.

'Good,' said the Indian. Then he hurried away to the warden's house and secured one of his cloaks, a pistol, and a bull's-eye lantern. He got his canoe and came around for his friends. The three then paddled cautiously into the neighbourhood of the poachers, whom they quickly recognized as Dodge and Lanky.

The thoughts of the young men as they watched the poachers were studied. The preacher was pained to see the contemptible tricks of the poachers as they stole upon the poor sleeping fish and then endeavoured to spear them, only occasionally getting one into their boat. He was for ordering them to stop. Jonas sneered at their awkwardness and ill-success, and patiently waited

his time. The school-teacher was an interested spectator of the whole proceedings, but was eager to get his hands on the poachers.

Jonas whispered to the teacher, who sat next ahead of him in the canoe, that he was sure that Dodge would land at a certain place. So they kept their canoe between the poachers and the landing place.

About midnight Dodge and Lanky seemed to be satisfied, and turned the bow of their canoe towards the landing place.

Jonas and his friends had landed. The school-teacher was nearly the size of the warden, a trifle taller. On him Jonas had placed the warden's cloak and given him the pistol. He managed the lantern, and he and the preacher were to secure the canoe.

Dodge and Lanky paddled quickly in. The landing place was a couple of logs fastened at the edge of the rocky shore, a splendid place for a canoe. The men were merry over their luck, and joked each other about the Indian dog, whose fish had made them a supper.

'The warden may catch you again, Dodge,' said Lanky, teasingly.

'Never fear,' was the loud reply.

'Well, don't call him, Dodge,' said his companion, as they neared the shore.

Lanky was a good canoeman and swung his craft up neatly beside the logs. Suddenly from the gloom, hands were thrust out and seized the canoe. A bull's-eye lantern flashed its light into

Dodge's face, and the cloak of the warden loomed up, while the barrel of a pistol was visible.

'Surrender in the name of the King!' thundered the pseudo-warden.

'Neatly caught, eh, Dodge? Jonas, help him out.'

At the order to surrender, Lanky sprang out of the canoe on the far side and swam away for dear life. No effort was made to catch him. Dodge yielded sullenly, and Jonas after helping him out of the canoe, led him a little way back into the bush. He seemed to have forgotten something, and told Dodge to wait while he got it. As soon as Jonas was well away, Dodge, as it was really desired of him, took to his heels and ran for his home.

Jonas and his friends re-entered their canoe, and, towing the other one after them, paddled away.

Dodge's empty canoe was found at his landing place in the morning. He was glad to see it again, and he never made any inquiries about his fish and illicit fishing-tackle.

XVIII

THE HAY THIEF

HAL BERKLEY had charge of the 'up' team that kept communication open between the Sheppard lumber camps and the outside world. Hal drew his load of miscellaneous provisions and other camp requisites to a point fifteen miles from the railroad. Here he was met by the 'down' team, generally in charge of Tom McFarland, which took the load from him and carried it twelve or sixteen miles farther, over very rough roads into the camp or camps to which the goods were consigned.

The journey to and from the point of meeting was a heavy day's work, and was performed six days a week.

At this place of meeting the men and horses had their noon meals. The horses were unhitched and carefully blanketed, for the roads in a new country are seldom, even in winter, good for any distance, and as a consequence the horses were generally very warm. They were then turned round and used their sleigh boxes for mangers. After transferring the load from Hal's sleigh to

Tom's, the men built a little fire and soon had a pail of tea steaming. Hal brought out a large loaf of bread and uncovered a cake of butter that was in the bottom of his pail. He then cut off good-sized pieces, and sharpened a forked stick, which he used for a toasting fork. While Hal was making the toast, Tom, with another tin pail, warmed up the pork and beans. In this way the drivers lived as well as did the men in the camp.

They had company also. The chickadees hopped round Hal in a friendly way, picked up the crumbs and flew away, with 'tee-eet's' of thanks. Larger and coarser-looking meat-birds watched to see any piece of pork that fell to the ground, and snow-birds frisked round the horses and men to secure some of the oats or crumbs which they might scatter about. Circling in the azure above their heads were huge ravens. They also knew the place of meeting, and the generous disposition of both men to empty on the ground the leavings of their dinner pails. They had always found pork rinds or half-picked bones or something else as dainty, but they had too many suspicions of even these men to cultivate their friendship as did the other visitors; and so they delayed their feast until the men left. Then with a swoop and a flutter, they took possession, disputed only by an occasional meat-bird.

There were other visitors to the camp, and their depredations were soon made apparent to the men.

Hal's team was a great deal stronger than the

other, and he had some advantage in the roads, for most of the way it was used by some settlers and other lumbermen. He was thus able to bring much larger loads than Tom could take into camp. Hay and oats were considerable items on the loads, and what Tom could not take of these the men piled up neatly at the roadside, and covered with a heavy tarpaulin to protect them from the snow.

But the men had been suspicious now for several days. Their tarpaulin had been disarranged, and a bale or two of hay had disappeared. The oats, which were piled on top of the hay, had not been disturbed. This greatly surprised them. The culprit had been modest in his thefts, and he, or they, had also been very cunning in coming on nights when snow was falling so that their tracks would be carefully covered up, thus defying all detection.

‘There’s a hay thief round here,’ at last declared Tom.

‘I know it,’ replied Hal, ‘and I’ve been trying to catch him, but I can’t. Snow comes every night he is here and covers up the tracks.’

‘Who do you think it is?’

‘I don’t know. There are no people for some miles round that I know of. Dickens’ camp is three miles east. Their road turns off five miles down, and they wouldn’t come round ten miles or better to steal a bale or two of hay; not they. Anyway they would prefer oats, but not a bag has been taken.’

'Mrs. Moore's boy, Jimmy, came to the camp last night, begging for the wire off the hay bales.'

'Wonder what he wants the wire for?'

'I don't know. Better find out, and you may then know where your hay has gone to. That boy brought a fine fat beef into camp that day.'

'A neat, yellow-headed chap?'

'That's him.'

'I'll have a look at his place,' said Hal.

The loss of the hay had been promptly reported. The superintendent at first laughed at the idea of any one stealing hay when he could have oats, and treated indifferently the loss of a bale or two of hay. He only told Hal to keep a sharp look out. This man of authority, however, was annoyed when the loss was reported the third time, and he readily consented to Hal's request, made on the night after he had had his conversation with McFarland.

'I think I am on the track of the thief,' he said to the superintendent, 'and if you will send Hardy or Thompson to drive my team for a day or two, I should like to investigate.'

'All right,' said the superintendent, 'ferret it out, but don't waste too much time.'

The next day Hardy drove Hal's team. Hal went with him and met McFarland at the usual place. It was the same old story. The tarpaulin had been pulled aside and another bale of hay was missing.

Snow had fallen that morning, and not a sign or footprint was there by which to detect the culprit.

The day was one of rare beauty. The light

snow decked the trees and piled itself in odd shapes on branches, limbs, and tree trunks. The sunlight played upon these, and made the woods look like fairyland. The birds came in goodly numbers round the little camp fire, and Hal tweeted to them. His chickadees came bravely and received crumbs out of his hand. The meat-birds hopped to the branches near him as he was toasting his bread, and the snow-birds came in a group round his feet. Though he was much puzzled over the lost hay, he was very happy as he saw the little feathered folk play round him.

'You are pretty nearly as good as a circus man, Hal,' said Hardy. 'Can you do it, McFarland?'

'No, not now. I once could though. But I caught a few of the snow-birds and put them into my pot to give us a taste of fresh meat. After that they would not come near me. I tweeted and coaxed and scattered crumbs to them, but they wouldn't come. It looks as though they would not forgive.'

'You deserve to lose their confidence for doing such a thing,' declared Hardy.

'He could win them all right,' said Hal, 'only he is too hasty in his actions, and impatient. You must go steadily and gently about it, and they will come round all right. It warms a fellow's heart to feel their little wild feet on one's hand!'

Hal went a few miles with McFarland and then, strapping on his snow-shoes, and shouldering his gun, he plunged into the woods in the direction of the Moores' home.

He had not gone very far when he came upon a fairly well-beaten trail. Taking off his snowshoes, and tying them on his back, he turned and followed this trail. To his surprise he found that it came out on the road, about half a mile nearer the noon camp than the point at which he had left McFarland. It entered the road between two large pines whose branches swept the ground.

'Well, now,' exclaimed Hal, 'if that isn't the neatest blind road one ever saw.'

Filled with curiosity he turned again and hastened along the trail. He noticed that the willows and poplars on either side had been pretty well browsed. Deer had made it a runway, he thought, as well as the thief, who had made it his trail.

The trail led him over three hills, through heavy timber. Then he came to a beaver meadow. The trail led over this, down a river and over a lake and then into some burnt lands, which had been overgrown with second growths. Here he found other trails branching off. Then he was startled by an angry snort. Turning quickly, he saw a moose bull behind him, snorting and pawing up the snow, working up his courage to charge the strange intruder who had come into his yard. Hal jumped from the trail and sank into the deep snow, thus escaping further attention from this monarch of the forest.

Climbing a large beech tree, Hal saw that he was in a winter 'deer yard.' In the lee of a bunch of spruce the snow was tramped as hard as a barn

yard. From this, evidently their sleeping place, trails led out in various directions, and these crossed and recrossed, so that there was a regular network of trails all round.

While Hal was greatly interested in what he saw, he did not think that moose were the delinquents. They browsed for their food. He had seen it along the trail of the thief.

But he could not find the trail again. He thought that the thief had again fooled him by leading him into the moose yard, where his trail would be lost amidst their intricate network.

So he again strapped on his snowshoes, took his bearings afresh, and struck out in the direction in which he thought the Moore home was situated.

After working his way through the woods for several miles, Hal came at last to the Moore clearing, one of those little clearings hewn out of the forest by brave, hardy men, who break the way for civilization, and ere their lives are well begun and they have the opportunity to see the fruits of their labours, sink exhausted from their struggle with primeval nature, and die. The seed of civilization, like the seed of the Church, is the blood of its heroes and martyrs; and as the country progresses she should never forget to honour the memory of the pioneers.

From a point of vantage, Hal surveyed the place. He saw two big stacks of hay in the meadow, but they were well protected with high rail fences.

'Ahem!' said Hal, 'saving his own hay, eh, and using what he can find.'

The dog, discovering him, barked ferociously. Hal left off spying out the place and walked to the house. He was most cordially received by Jimmy, who recognized him as the friendly driver who had given him a ride, and also by Mrs. Moore herself.

The little log house was very neat and clean. The few things they had seemed to have their own places and were in them. Hal was not in the house long before he was told of Willie, and was shown into his room—a side of the log house boarded off. Here he found a big boy of eighteen or nineteen years of age in bed.

When the father had died some time before, Will looked upon himself as the mainstay of the family. After the potatoes had all been gathered in, two years ago, and Jim was considered big enough to look after the few cattle that they had, Will thought that he could better the affairs at home by earning some money at the lumber camp, which had begun operations near them. From this place he could easily keep in touch with his home.

Lumbermen have to meet many dangers while engaged in their work in the woods, but perhaps the most treacherous of all is the 'sailer.' This is a large branch of a fallen monarch, broken off and held in the air by the limbs of other trees. This branch, or 'sailer,' may stay there for a few hours or for years. Then it will gradually be loosened by the winds from its aerial perch and, without warning, descend like an arrow. Some men have

been killed instantly when struck by these dangerous branches.

Will Moore had not been working more than three months in the bush when one of these treacherous 'sailers' fell and struck him. He was stooping over a log, and it caught him fairly in the back. From that time Will had been a helpless invalid.

For nearly two years he had now lain upon his bed. With a stout heart his mother had borne the blow, and had done what she could for him—washing, anointing, and soothing him, instincts of nursing suddenly called out and developed by her loneliness and need.

While Will could not move himself, and had to be on his back, he had full use of his arms. His mother taught him to sew and knit, and in this way he rendered her great service.

One day Jimmy brought home a bit of hay-wire. This Will made into hooks and fastened them together in such a way that they made a good sock-holder. This was so much better than the wooden affairs commonly used by the settlers and shanty-men that Will thought they would buy their hooks from him if he could make them; so he asked Jimmy to get him some more wire. This he did from the Dickens' camp.

Will told Hal all about this, and then added, enthusiastically—

'There's a nice bunch of wire Jimmy got the other day from Sheppard's camp. If I get that all made up, I'll have more sock-hooks than the people

here will want. Do you know of any one in town who can use them?’

‘Why, yes,’ said Hal, rather chokingly. ‘I’ll get our clerk to have them enamelled, and we’ll sell all you can make.’

Hal was beginning to feel sick at the thought of his suspicious errand and kind reception.

‘That’ll be fine!’ said Will, gratefully, and calling his mother to his side, he told her of the good news.

Hal wanted to leave that evening, but Mrs. Moore would not hear of it. He could bunk with Jimmy and set off on the morrow. While Mrs. Moore was getting tea, Hal went out with Jimmy and helped him do up the chores.

In spite of the fact that he was now convinced that he was on the wrong track, he looked round and examined the hay; but no baled hay was to be seen.

‘Why do you have such high, heavy fences round your haystacks?’ asked Hal, a little slyly.

‘Oh,’ said Jimmy, ‘that’s to keep out the moose. There are moose round here, and they tore down the fence a couple of times. Then mother and I built those. They haven’t pulled them down.’

‘Why, do moose eat hay?’

‘Just guess they do,’ declared Jimmy, most emphatically, ‘and you’d know it too if you had to work to keep them off, as we have to.’

‘Why don’t you shoot them?’

‘Mother doesn’t like guns.’

‘Why not trap him?’

‘I did snare one.’

'How?'

'Just like a rabbit. I hadn't much wire and I tied it to a rail. A moose cow got her head into the noose and carried the rail for a quarter of a mile through the woods. I followed her track. The rail caught between two trees and there she was, dead. Mother and I dragged her home, and we had some good venison.'

In the barn Jimmy pointed out some fine cattle that he was fattening, and was going to sell to the lumbermen for beef.

'If we do well with them, perhaps we can give Will a chance,' he said.

'A chance? How?'

'The doctor from Dickens' camp gave us a call, and said that there was hope for Will if he could only get treated in Toronto Hospital. His back would never be real strong, but then he could get healed some, and with a jacket of something stiff he could go round.'

'That would greatly relieve your mother.'

'I just think it would. She's a slave to him. She has to wash and lift him like a baby.'

'Will seems pretty bright and brave.'

'He is, now that he has something to do. He felt bad enough and fretted a lot at first, when he could do nothing; but we are doing better now. I sold two dollars' worth of Will's hooks at Dickens' camp, and the meat I took to Sheppard's brought thirty-five dollars.'

Early next morning, Hal strapped on his snowshoes and started away.

'Where are you going?' asked Jimmy, as he saw the direction Hal was taking.

'Going to the noon camp, up the road,' replied Hal.

'Well, you'll walk round the earth to get to it that way. Here's a trail that will almost take you to the place you want to find.'

So Hal came back and took the trail pointed out by Jimmy, and found himself after a short walk on the road within two miles of the camp.

When the camp was reached he again found that the hay had been disturbed. There had been a light fall of snow, but Hal saw some things which he had not before noticed. It was only the hay of the broken bales that was taken, and this was eaten on the spot or trampled in the snow. Hal was now thoroughly convinced as to the personality of the principal thief.

'I have a score to settle with you, my lad,' he remarked.

That afternoon he went to the village with Hardy. He secured a coil of flexible, medium-heavy wire. The next day he brought it out with him. At one end he made a huge loop, and fastened the other end high up to a strong but supple spruce tree. It was something like an exaggerated rabbit snare, with some hay carefully placed for bait.

The following day he found the hay untouched, and the big snare unmoved. But the third day, to his delight, he found a huge moose in his trap—dead.

Hal brought his prize home that night. It was put on the company's big scales and weighed seven hundred and sixty pounds. His catch was the talk of that little railroad town. A gentleman stopping at the hotel wished to buy it for a restaurant in the city, and offered Hal ten cents a pound for his moose.

'And twenty-five dollars for its head,' said Hal.

'I agree.'

'All right,' replied Hal. And the man counted out one hundred and one dollars.

Hal could not rest until he had sent the roll of bills as 'conscience money' to Mrs. Moore, requesting her to add it to what she already had to send Will to the hospital, as the doctor had suggested.

The joy and gratitude of the family can well be imagined, and fortunately they never had to know why their share in the booty was so generous.

XIX.

UNCLE HENRY'S BEAR STORY

‘**Y**ES,’ said Uncle Henry to his grandchildren, as we gathered around him and asked for the story, ‘it was quite a while ago. It was when grandmother and I were young, when we made a start for ourselves in this new country. I had but fifty acres of cleared land, and the neighbours—there were not many then—had about the same amount. Bush was the chief thing there, and so we had a few bears. Still there were not so many. The boys, with their traps, deadfalls, and guns, had made them rather scarce, even in those early days. But one spring, when we had been fortunate enough to have some splendid lambs, a bear came around and helped himself to the best that we had.

‘The next night I kept the window towards the barnyard open, so that I might hear any commotion that might occur, and, if possible, prevent any further depredation. Sure enough, about midnight I heard a considerable noise in the barnyard. I looked out and it seemed as if the whole stock of the yard, the sheep, cattle, and

pigs, were running around like animals in a circus ring. And there, in the midst of them, in an easy lope, a great black bear was bounding around them. He seemed to be doing no harm; he was apparently having some fun in getting the yard astir. But he knew what he was doing. He wanted to see the best lamb in the yard. Quick as I was in getting out, I was not quick enough; for he had picked up the lamb and had made off to the woods with it before I reached the yard. The next day, at the edge of the bush, we found the skin of the lamb and some of the larger bones.

'The next night I determined to watch for the bear. Noting the place where the lambskin was found, I thought that the bear would come from that quarter, and so I stationed myself at that side of the yard, determining to shoot the bear before he did any damage.

'I waited patiently. It was a raw, spring night, not as clear as the night before, but the moon shone through the clouds and we were able to see quite a distance away. All the yard had been quiet for some time. The pigs had buried themselves in the straw, and the other stock had made nesting-places for themselves.

'I was getting cold, but I caught sight of a dark object coming over the rail fence near the bush, and I forgot the cold. Nearer and nearer it came. The gait was most provokingly leisurely. Every little while it would stop. Then, as he turned from side to side and sniffed the air, I saw that it

was a big black bear. On he came in his leisurely way. I picked up my gun, put it to my shoulder, prepared to fire when the bear came within range; for we had only muzzle-loaders in those days—at least that was all that I had—and they do not do deadly work at any great distance. I was all ready to fire.

“Henry, Henry, where are you, dear?” came a sweet voice from the door of the house. “You must be cold sitting there so long. I’ve made a cup of coffee for you, dear. Come and get it.”

‘At the first sound the bear stopped, turned his head a moment, and then disappeared. All that I seemed to have seen was a shadow flitting with great rapidity over the field.

‘I felt unutterable things, but I held my breath a moment, put down the gun and then went to the house. I thanked my wife for her consideration, and drank the coffee. Then I told her how near I was to getting that bear. She looked at me as much as to say, “And you didn’t swear at me!”

‘The next night I renewed my watch. It was a clear cool night. The cattle had nestled down, midnight came, and there was no sign of Mr. Bear. One o’clock came and still no sign.

“‘I thought you would be hungry to-night and come earlier,” said I, in my thoughts, to the bear; but they are suspicious animals. However, about two o’clock I saw him again climb the fence and come over the field. He came more slowly than before, and sniffed the air oftener; but on he came. Then I noticed that he stopped altogether and

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listened for a while. Then he came a little farther. I got my gun in readiness. The bear stopped again. A gentle hand fell on my shoulder, and I turned in some alarm and surprise.

"I was lonely in the house, Henry, and I thought that I would come and watch with you," said the pleading voice.

"I turned abruptly away to see the bear, but he was nowhere to be seen.

"I think that we may as well go in now," said I. "I do not think that the bear will come to-night. Have you some coffee?"

"No, dear," she said meekly. "You seemed rather put out with me last night for calling you and scaring the bear away, so I thought I would wait until you came in. Then I grew lonely, and I came as quietly as I could to you."

"And did you think that your coming would scare him away again?"

"Well, I came very quietly. I came to the stable and stood still to see if I could find you. Then I walked across the yard, and looked again to find you; at last I found you, and came as quietly as I could."

"Then I understood why the bear stopped several times; but I suppose that he thought that it was one of the cattle moving in the yard, and then, when all was still again, he came on.

"I hope that I haven't scared the bear again," she added, with a catch in her voice, showing that tears were not far away.

"Never mind if you have. I hope that he has

been scared enough to leave this place alone," said I.

'We went into the house and had a cup of coffee.

'The next day neighbour Grice came over in great consternation that a big bear had got into his barnyard and had killed a fine calf. He was rousing up the neighbourhood for a big bear hunt. It was too bad that people could not live in peace.

"But you know that the bush is near, and we must expect a few such losses," I said teasingly.

'He was very angry with me, and demanded that I should join the bear hunt. I asked him where they wanted me to watch.

"You are to watch at the back of my barn."

"Thanks," said I, "I'll look after my own place, and you keep guard over your own."

'He stormed, and thought that I was selfish, when he and the neighbours had their flocks endangered.

"But I have lost three lambs, and probably by the same bear," said I quietly.

"You never said anything about it," he said.

"Why should I? Such things are to be expected here, and since then I have been out at nights to guard my flock, and you can do the same."

"But the neighbours are going out to-night and we shall expect you," he said, as he left the house.

'I found out from some others that Grice went around to all the homes for six miles. He had given the bear a bad name and had made the

people think that I had had my sheep, and cattle pen as well, cleaned out. I told them the truth and that, if they were in earnest about the hunt, I would join them that night.

‘In looking over the ground, I thought that the bear would probably wander from Grice’s bush across the beech ridge, and so I chose for my post the little bluff of the ridge that had been cleared. From this point I could overlook my own farm, the road, and another clearing that the bear would have to cross in going from one bush to another.

‘At ten o’clock I took my post. The night was very fine. The moon rode a cloudless sky. The air was quite warm after the sunshiny day. A damp, rich spring smell was in the air. I gathered some leaves and made myself as comfortable as possible, and prepared to do my duty as sentinel.

‘The next thing I remember was that I opened my eyes upon a lovely spring day! The sun was shining brightly, the air was warm, and a gentle breeze was fanning my cheek. I sprang to my feet with a start, and hardly dared accuse myself of the truth of sleeping at my post! But such were the evidences all around me, and, more, I had slept far into the day, into a most beautiful spring Sabbath day. Everything around me looked lovely; a rich peace was over the land. The only noise was the sweet carol of some spring bird, a carol for the King of kings on one of the most perfect mornings He had created! And I had been on an errand of death, and had slept at my post! In my look around I noticed something else. In the soft

spring soil, right down the ridge to the place where I had been lying, there was a line of tracks, of bear's tracks, freshly made. There had been a halt, as if he had stopped to look and sniff at the sleeping man. Then, instead of molesting him, the bear had gone his way. I made haste to my home.

"That's my last bear hunt, Mary," said I, and I told her all that had happened. "If bears are such gentlemen," I added, "they can come and have a lamb once in a while, for I shall never shoot one."

'A few days afterwards, when I heard that the Molson boys had trapped and shot an enormous bear, weighing over six hundred pounds, having most powerful limbs, I was sorry, very sorry, for I could not but think that he was the one who had visited our place and been the gentleman who had sniffed at the sleeping sentinel, and, though he could have crushed him with a blow of his powerful paw, he considerately left him alone and went his way.'

XX

THE MISFIT

'I'M Nehemiah Rockwell, your new preacher,' he announced, at the door of the church steward to whom he had been directed.

'You're welcome,' said the worthy steward, who had tilted his chair back to the wall and was chewing a toothpick after eating his five-o'clock supper. 'Where's your horse?'

He brought his chair square with the floor and waited for the answer.

'My horse!'

'Yes.'

'Why, I haven't any. I walked from the cars.'

'Well,' said the steward, tilting his chair back to the wall as there was no horse to put away, 'you will have to get one. You cannot do the work on this six-appointment mission without a horse. It's more than sixty miles round.'

It may be put down as a maxim that every young man who goes into the northern districts should know something of a horse, and how to ride one. There are some other things to know, certainly, but this accomplishment must not be

forgotten, or there will be heartaches from chagrin, and perhaps other trouble.

While in the sea-girt Newfoundland, Nehemiah Rockwell had heard the call of the Church for volunteer home missionaries. Now, the hardy fishermen of Newfoundland, in their rocky isle and wave-lashed coast, fed by the harvests of the sea, think that there is no other land so favoured or so blessed of God. They know the sea, their boats, and their Bibles. Of other things they sometimes hear, and, after puzzling over how they work and how people bother with them, think that they cannot be of much consequence because they are not used or needed in Newfoundland. Spiritual zeal and sanctification should not be confounded with worldly knowledge, technical skill, or executive ability. Their full glory appear in men blessed with the latter graces and accomplishments, but they are also found where the minds of men are cramped by ignorance, conceit, and national bigotry. Nehemiah was a good specimen of the latter, and well exhibited the circumscribed life and thought of his ancestors as with holy zeal he had left his native land and, on the order of the Church, had gone to the Woodhill Mission.

The five-mile walk from the little railway station had been full of charm for him. The woods under the gentle hand of June had blossomed abundantly, and were rich in foliage and flower; the little lakes shone like polished silver, and the only clouds that flecked the purest of blue skies were fleecy and white. Feasting his eyes upon these glories, he

had thanked God over and over again for bringing him to such a beautiful land. Then he had wondered what kind of people dwelt amidst such beautiful surroundings.

The scattered settlers in that new country were too busy with axe, hoe, and plough, in making homes and living, to pause and admire the glories of nature. Pork, potatoes, and cabbages they were seeking, with an occasional dish of fish, partridge, and venison. Hardy, uncouth, but warm-hearted, they were fair specimens of the pioneer settlers who brave the unbroken forest and pave the way for advancing civilization. While they could not bother about the natural beauties of their surroundings, there were some souls who reached to heights eternal, who worshipped God and longed for pastoral care and leadership to perfect their faith and help their neighbours.

The holy zeal that burned in the Church and thrust men out to work in the Master's vineyard was not active enough to supply the present demand with home preachers. The Macedonian cry was, therefore, sounded, and hence our volunteer from the fisherman's home, dear old Newfoundland.

Nehemiah Rockwell stood in the steward's doorway somewhat dumbfounded at this first greeting by his new parishioners. He had thought that his announcement of himself as their pastor would have brought them to their feet, cap in hand. But such coolness! Surely this people did not know how to welcome a minister! And, then, that question about a horse!

'You'll come in and have a bite, won't you?' said the housewife, hospitably.

'That's right,' added the husband, 'come right in and make yourself at home. We'll lend you old Dolly for to-morrow, but after that you must make other arrangements for a horse.'

'Thank you,' said Nehemiah as he entered. He put his hat on a peg, his satchel in a corner, and in the easy, kindly atmosphere, forgot all about that nightmare of a horse.

Sabbath morning broke in splendour over the land. The verdant hills shone in glory and the myriad leaves, in every shade of living green, danced in the gentle breeze. Nehemiah Rockwell had arisen early and gone out to commune with God and worship Him amidst His glorious creations.

By the aid and instructions of his steward, the young preacher had drawn a map of the mission, of its roads and churches, and he thought that he had that matter well in hand. The worthy steward led out Dolly, a stout, serviceable horse that knew how to plough and to save her feet in travelling the rocky, root-infested paths of the country.

With some awkwardness, Nehemiah took his seat in Dolly's saddle and started up the north road. He was full of exclamations of wonder and praise of the glories that surrounded him. The horse was as wonderful as anything else. She was almost as good as a sail-boat. He had now joined the band of noble 'circuit riders,' of whom he had

read but had little appreciated what their real experiences were. This was glorious!

Dolly took things easily and jogged along. Nehemiah soon felt his seat uncomfortable, and brought Dolly to a walk. Then he got off her back and walked by her side for about a mile. Noticing by his watch that time was flying, Nehemiah thought that he had better remount and hasten. Leading Dolly to a stump he attempted to regain his seat. Dolly seemed to know what kind of a man she had to deal with and so played with him some time ere she allowed him to mount. Nehemiah was, therefore, quite warm when he sat back in the saddle. So he took off his coat and fastened it in front of him. As the breeze fanned his cheeks and puffed his shirtsleeves he thought it very refreshing. Coming to a marked turn he consulted his watch and map. He had consumed nearly all his time and was not more than half-way!

He tried to make Dolly go near a tree while he secured a branch for a whip, but Dolly would not allow this. Finally he got off, broke a limb, and, after trimming away the leaves, remounted with better success than on the previous occasion. Dolly had her eye on that switch.

Nehemiah shook it at Dolly. She laid back her ears, flipped her tail, but did not increase her speed. Nehemiah struck her, and, in protest, Dolly whisked her tail more vigorously. Nehemiah applied the whip in real earnest, and Dolly, losing patience, sprang into a gallop.

This was what Nehemiah wanted when he

whipped Dolly, but having attained the goal of his ambition he wished that he hadn't succeeded. He did not know how to master the situation. His feet slipped out of the stirrups. Backwards and forwards he bounded on the saddle. He lost the use of the reins and gripped Dolly wildly by the mane. Finally he threw his long arms around her neck and clung there for dear life. Dolly plunged wildly on, the pounding weight on her back causing her as much alarm as her gait caused the rider. Down the road, through the woods, past the little log houses and clearings they dashed. Then on to the log schoolhouse, where the morning service was to be held.

Here, as in other backwoods places, the male portion of the congregation never think of entering the place of worship until the preacher arrives. They were all seated on stumps, fallen logs, or on the grass around the door, talking of the weather, crops, tanbark peeling, and hunting. Past them, in good John Gilpin style, Dolly and Nehemiah galloped. The laugh and shout sprang readily to their lips. Two of the young men sprang into their saddles and hastened to catch the runaway. Being lighter and fresher, these horses soon overtook Dolly. The men caught her reins, eased her pace, and finally brought her to a standstill. Nehemiah regained his seat and tried to regain his breath. His shaken mind was struggling for an excuse of the situation.

'The—the horse didn't fit, did it, boys?' he stammered.

The young woodsmen looked at him in grim amazement and could not trust themselves to speak. But when they saw the preacher safely inside the schoolhouse, they turned and ran into the woods. They hugged each other and danced and laughed, as over and over again they repeated Nehemiah's words and mimicked his tone and stuttering: 'The — the horse didn't fit, did it, boys?' They nearly took a fit themselves, and it was with very wet eyes and red faces that they met the dispersing congregation. Some of the people looked suspiciously at the young men and attempted to smell their breaths.

'Our breath's all right,' said they mockingly. 'How did the sermon fit?'

'He's a grand preacher, that!' was the prompt reply.

'We're so glad,' said Steele, as soberly as he could; but Woods could hardly contain his laughter, and his face, consequently, became vividly red.

'What's the matter with you fellows, anyway?' was the imperious demand.

'Get that preacher out of the way and we'll tell you; and do it quickly or we'll burst.'

These remarks roused the people's curiosity, and so they did not hasten away. Nehemiah felt complimented as he thought that they had all remained to become acquainted with him. Preachers little know what holds some congregations together. In shaking hands all around he came to Bill Woods and Tom Steele, who tried to avoid him, but he met them face to face and gave each a hearty handgrip

that surprised them because of its strength and vigour. Finally some of the older people carried the preacher away for dinner, and then the young men told their story. The people laughed as only good-hearted, innocent people can laugh.

Before long Nehemiah heard of it ; but, to his chagrin, he found that it was only a sample of the many laughs that he was continually giving this people. The shell of his past life was crumbling all around him, and he was seeing a new, big, strange world, and, what was worse to him, he was in the midst of a people as narrow and ignorant, in a little different way, perhaps, as the people he had left ; and who laughed at his deeds, words, and even questions. His good humour, piety, industry, and increasing knowledge had a hard struggle against his provincialism and sensitiveness.

The annual Sunday school picnic was due about four weeks after Nehemiah's arrival. Young fellows like Steele and Woods were not satisfied with the usual quiet event within the woods, with swings and races and ball-play. They had visited some outside places, and the school, in their opinion, ought to have a real outing on the big lakes. The dangers, difficulties, and expense of such were met and overcome by the advocates of the new picnic ground. So it was arranged that they should join several other Sunday schools that had chartered a large steamer and go to Rainbow Falls. With great enthusiasm, decked in all their gala ribbons and new suits, the people, young and old,

came by waggon and train to the lakes. There they met the big steamer, and had a delightful sail through the islands to the picnic grounds at the Falls.

Not satisfied with the steamboat ride, Steele and Woods and another young man rented a sail-boat, and took their girls for a sail. The deceptive breeze coaxed them out into the lake. It was delightful. They laughed, ate pea-nuts, and thought of nothing but happiness. The breeze sharpened, but it only made the boat go faster, and so increased the pleasure of the outing.

The proverbial picnic shower came, and the people hastened for shelter to the boat. Those in the sail-boat were drenched, and in trying to turn their boat around they lost control. The weather suddenly became squally, and the waves rough, with a heavy sea driving to the west. The young sailors were almost frantic with fear.

Nehemiah seemed to be everywhere amongst his people, seeing that all had as good a time as possible, especially the little children. Looking out over the lake, he noticed the sail-boat.

'What's the matter there?' he shouted. 'They seem to have lost control of their boat.'

'She's driving before the wind all right,' said the captain of the steamer, 'and she's making hard for the Falls. They'd better look out, or they are goners.'

Nehemiah jumped over the steamer's railing to the wharf, and, without asking leave, cut loose another sail-boat that was dancing by the

boat-lender's wharf and sprang into it. In a moment he had the sail in its place and the boat scudding before the wind.

'Look at that for sailing, mate,' shouted the captain, as he and his second watched Nehemiah handle his boat. The preacher was in his element as he bounded the waves. These were his native horses, the breaking spray their streaming manes. The captain and his mate delighted in the master-sailing of the preacher; and as the poor people crowded the boat's side in terror for their loved ones, they wondered at the captain's words.

'Will he catch them, captain?' asked the anxious people.

'What will he do if he does?' growled the old man. But to his mate he added, 'Bob, I wish I were with that boy. He's a son of the sea.'

Wind and current had the sail-boat in their grip, and were hurrying it, apparently with demoniacal glee and purpose, to destruction. But, swift as it sailed, Nehemiah's boat gained on her. Lashing his sail and rudder, he prepared the anchor, which was little larger than a heavy, dull grappling-hook, and placed it for use. Then he again handled sail and rudder, the little boat responding, if possible, with greater speed. Nehemiah began circling in, and with a rush his boat shot across the bow of the other.

'Drop your sail,' he shouted, and cast his grapple. But a big wave pitched the boat away, and the grapple missed.

Woods and Steele heard the words above the roar of the wind, and frantically tore down the sail. The boat's speed and erratic leaps perceptibly decreased. Nehemiah checked the speed of his boat, brought it around, and came quickly back. This time the grapple caught, and the runaway was brought sharply round in tow, within a hundred yards of the raging Falls!

The captain could not find good words to express himself, and poured oath-bespattered compliments on the young preacher. The good people were so absorbed, however, in the deed and in cheering that they did not hear him, and were thus saved from any evil contamination.

Nehemiah's little craft towed the other boat well out of danger. Then, as the wind was still strong, and he feared that he could not beat up with his tow to the wharf, he dropped back beside the other, sprang on board, and took his own craft in tow.

His orders rang out sharp and clear. The big sail was again hauled up, and he took the rudder. Backwards and forwards he worked into the teeth of the wind. It was a sharp battle, but steadily he gained, up and up, inch by inch, and foot by foot, and a score of hands seized the boat as it shot by the wharf.

'I guess the boat didn't fit, did it, boys?' said Nehemiah, cheerily, to his boat companions when the boats were secured to the wharf; but with their blanched faces and chattering teeth, Woods and Steele had nothing to say. They gladly sprang

ashore and lost themselves in the crowd; while the girls were hurried away by the womenfolk.

'You've been away just an hour,' said the boatman to Nehemiah, 'and my charge is a dollar an hour. You have cut a rope. I must have a quarter for that.'

'Get out,' roared the captain. 'He brought your other boat back and saved six lives.'

'But he had this boat away for an hour,' persisted the boat-lender.

'Here's your dollar,' said the school superintendent. 'Be off with you, lest the young men mob you.'

Eagerly clutching the dollar, the boatman backed away, and hastened to find Woods and Steele, to make them square their account.

Nehemiah had come to his own. His bad horsemanship was almost forgotten and entirely pardoned. He was now his people's hero.

'He's a man, if he can't ride a horse,' said the superintendent; and all the young men on Woodhill Mission are ready to thrash the man who does not agree with that statement.

XXI

THE THREAD OF GOLD

PART I

GRANNY WILKES

‘**Y**OU'RE a stranger, I'm thinking,’ said Grandmother Wilkes, closely scrutinizing me.
‘Yes, Grandma. Mrs. Middlebrook is inside.’

‘Hetty, you mean. We'll be glad to see her. Winter'll soon be here and we must put the place to rights, especially to make the stable comfortable.’

‘Aren't you pretty old to do outside work?’

‘I can't abide inside work,’ she said rather shortly. ‘I never did like it anyway. I'm ninety come spring, and when I can work outside I'm well, and when I can't I'm not. My dear man that loved me so, let me do as I liked about it. It's but a thread now, that ring. The outside work may be hard on it, but I guess it will wear as long now as I will, and then I shall soon be with him where no rings are worn, and I shall have him and his love for ever.’

The withered features became beautiful as she spoke, and the voice lost its querulous uncertainties.

'Mother!' came a peremptory voice.

'Yes, Sue,' replied the old lady, not too meekly. There was power and rebellion in her voice.

'Come in, come in!' was the loud but short-breathed demand. The order was from one exasperated and authoritative, but not always obeyed.

'I'm coming—presently,' said the old lady, with her thin, quivery voice.

The sweetness had faded from her face, and she looked at me shrewdly as if I were the cause of that command to enter the house.

'You'll be coming in, sir,' she said.

'Yes, Grandma, I've come just to see you.'

'That's kind, but you won't see much.'

'I see a heroine. Mrs. Middlebrook has told me something.'

'Hetty shouldn't be saying things about me, an independent old grannie who won't bide indoors, nor sit in the cosy corners of her granddaughters' homes,' she said whimsically.

'And George has told me something too.'

How her face changed, lit again with the love light.

'You knew George, *my* George?' she questioned, looking straightly at me.

'Yes, Grandma, and loved him too.'

She would have taken me in her arms, had not Mrs. Middlebrook appeared, and Grandma seemed to become conscious of the fact that she was an old woman, covered with dirt and looking like a hag, and she quietly slipped away and entered the back door.

Mrs. Middlebrook looked at me appealingly to forgive her grandmother.

'Your grandmother is a great woman, Mrs. Middlebrook,' I said.

It was more than she had expected, and she looked quizzically at me and seemed to wish herself many miles away.

'Grandma does insist upon being out and puttering around doing such dirty work. She doesn't need to either,' she said, a little snappishly.

'But her soul is all right, and it is the soul that counts with me.'

'Well, you men are funny creatures. There's no accounting for your taste. Grandma will like to talk to you anyway about George.'

'But I would rather hear her talk about herself.'

'Perhaps you can get her to—if you mention her wedding ring, which is now nothing but a thread of gold. Will and I wanted to get it enlarged and made over, so that it would be a good size.'

'And rob it of all its romance. Perhaps that ring has never been off your grandmother's hand since the day your grandfather put it on.'

'Perhaps not, but one might as well wear a piece of wire as that. It's loose, too, and if it were not for her finger being crooked, it would have been off long ago.'

'It's as constant and tenacious as her love.'

'Well, have your way; but you needn't think that she lives up here with our wish or will. She

could have half-a-dozen good homes, but she is so independent that she will not more than visit any one and that for the shortest time limit. Aunt Sarah and Uncle Henry, who own this farm, and have perhaps the first claim on her, wanted her to live with them, but she wouldn't. The only way they could get her out of the woods, where she lived with Aunt Sue and Betty, was to compromise, sell her this plot of two acres and help her to build on it. And even in clearing the land and in building the house, she would have little assistance from the men, and wouldn't have a carpenter "what had to be paid for," because she said that she couldn't afford to pay any, when Will was ready to pay for the whole building and so were others.'

And the dear little woman hardly knew whether to laugh or cry.

'Rather spirited old lady, eh. A genuine heroine,' I exclaimed; and my companion compromised her smiles and tears by tossing her head contemptuously.

'I wish that she could be sensible,' she said.

'And be run by her daughters and grand-daughters. Not she!' said I, and Mrs. Middlebrook laughed heartily, even if a little hysterically.

'I hope that she will talk your head off,' she added somewhat viciously.

Mrs. Middlebrook called Betty over from the stable and told her to put the horse away. Betty came, but I insisted upon her directing me. Mrs. Middlebrook went into the house, where she, no



'WAKE UP, PREACHER! ARE YOU DEAD OR ALIVE?'

doubt, put forth strenuous efforts to prepare her grandmother and Aunt Sue for company.

Betty and I succeeded in stabling and feeding the horse. The girl was stout and strong. Her hair was done up in two fat and shining braids with the ends tied together behind her back. Her skirt was of stout tweed like the one grandmother wore. Her blouse was of serviceable thick cotton stuff, turned back from the neck and well rolled above her elbows. She wore a stout pair of shoes and thick woollen stockings. Altogether, Betty presented the appearance of a very healthy, active, and muscular young woman. She knew her stable and handled her pitch-fork like a man. In manner she was shy, and in conversation almost dumb. She, however, communicated the fact that she was an orphan. She had unbounded respect, if not adoration, for Grannie Wilkes; while her conception of Aunt Sue was that 'she's one for you.' Mrs. Middlebrook she characterized as 'a good company woman, but not good for work like us folks.'

On the way to the house, Betty pointed to the front door and then ran for the back. I took the hint, approached the newly-painted door, and gently knocked.

Mrs. Middlebrook opened the door and was about to present me to the company.

'Allow me to introduce to you——' she began in her gracious, sweet way; but bursting from the back of the room, with the plunge of a whale, came a big, muscular, impulsive woman, neatly garbed.

'I'm Aunt Sue. Guess you don't know me, but you soon will,' she said, and spreading her big right hand fan-fashion, she offered it to me and shook mine with great heartiness. I understood then and there why no man was needed at Grannie's. No work could lie unaccomplished before Aunt Sue, and no man of ill intent could trifle with her fists. As Betty had said, 'She's one for you.'

Mrs. Middlebrook had Grannie robed in a neat black dress with white lace at throat and wrists. Her thin white hair was brushed back and crowned with a piece of lace. Her carriage was more erect, her manner more quiet and easy than when I first met her. Grannie Wilkes was now a personage of dignity to be honoured and respected. Her reception had the dignity and courtesy of a duchess, with the grace that puts one completely at one's ease. She had no excuse for Aunt Sue and she made none. If I understood that noble, energetic, unselfish body, I could forgive her demonstrative manner; if I did not know her, Grannie seemed to think that I could wait and learn of her virtues for myself.

'Come right in and sit down,' said Aunt Sue, with the manner and voice of a bluff, hearty sea-captain, 'and I'll get dinner right away. Will you take four eggs, mister? I generally eat three and, seeing you're a man, I'll put in four for you.'

'Two is my limit, I thank you,' I protested.

'We've got lots of eggs,' declared Aunt Sue, 'and you needn't stint yourself here.'

I protested that two were all that I ever took at a meal.

'I thought it would be a good thing to have a man here to see one eat something,' said Aunt Sue, as she disappeared into the kitchen.

Then Grannie asked about her George, and considering it a step towards the story I wanted, I told her as much as I could of our companionship in Fort William. She loved all her eleven children, but as George had gone farthest from her, she thought most about him. I was glad that I could give such a good account of George, for he was really an excellent fellow, a true friend, and a genuine Christian, though his surroundings had been at times trying enough.

'Yes, I always had the children up at daylight Sunday morning, dressed them as well as I could, and trundled them off to church. Sometimes the walking was bad and the weather stormy, and the way long, but we generally pulled through. Services came nearer and oftener as time came on. I have had the satisfaction of hearing all my children profess their faith and love for God before they were fourteen.'

'That is saying a great deal, Grandma,' I said. 'I fear that not many mothers can say that.'

'If they had the faith and the energy they could all do as well as I did. God is no respecter of persons, and we're humble enough folk.'

'I would that all mothers had your energy and faith, for George's life was fruit worth while and is great credit to your training.'

'He hadn't much, poor boy. It was work, work from dawn to dark, as soon as he was able. He had no schooling of any account; a few broken months two or three winters besides Sunday School, which I saw that he attended regular.'

'And which he appreciated and utilized the most, for he certainly knows and loves his Bible.'

This information, so satisfactory to her motherly and Christian heart, touched the fountain of her tears and loosed her tongue.

'George was but a baby when we left Ireland. It was hard to leave the dear lovely land; but we had seven boys and four girls, and what was there for them over there? "Come, my love," said my good man, "we'll renew our courting in a new land." He was always a lover, was he——' And she paused, lingering over thoughts and memories too dear for words to sully. The love light played over her face and shone in her eyes, a steady flame.

I wondered what some men would have given to see such a flame in the eyes of their wives—a light so constant, pure and unquenchable? Perhaps they could have developed it if they had been 'always a lover.' It was the love that many waters could not quench, the love that floods could not drown, and I was glad to behold it.

'The passage over was stormy,' continued Grannie Wilkes, 'and we had much sickness, but mine all landed well. There was some delay with our baggage at Montreal and again at Toronto. We had a few trunks and some hand baggage.

That was all that we brought to this back country with us.'

'How did you get on with all those children?'

'It was a little trying, but my man never quailed, and why should I? He laughed, and joked, and kissed—but he worked like a beaver. There was no going back. So we left word that we were locating up here, and that when our boxes were found, they could be forwarded on. But they never came. Anyway we did not wait for them. The boys soon had their lines in the river, and father soon had a shack made. The boys caught lots of fish, and we had no shortage in provisions all summer; no, nor ever had, that I mind of, in this Muskoka country. * We were not wanting much clothing either in the summer time, but we were put to it, I can tell you, when the cold weather began to come.

'We made clothes and shoes out of deer skins and store blankets. My husband and the boys had been quick and industrious. As soon as they had picked their land, they did not wait to clear any, but hunted out every open or broken spot, and planted potatoes. The result surprised us, for we had plenty for ourselves and some to sell. In fact it was a rule with us to plant a potato wherever there was room for one, and we found it no mistake. The early crops were always good, and we found ready market in the lumber camps for all that we had to sell. By winter a good log house was built, and when the snows came—and they did come—we were only short of clothing. We just nestled

closer together and made merrier. Father was the happiest and brightest—he was such a lover!

‘The next year he and the boys cleared land and planted wheat and oats as well as potatoes. Then more land was cleared, and we got some cattle. We felt that we were becoming prosperous and were happy. But it was not to be for long. My man and Jim, my eldest boy, went to help at a barn-raising. There was an accident. Father was carried home. He had just life enough to take my hand and hold it for a little while. He kissed me, said “Be brave, my love, and trust in God,” and he was gone.’

Her voice shook, fell to a whisper and then ceased. A tear rolled down each of her cheeks, and the others of us were also in tears. Grannie’s left hand rested on her knee so that the light shone on the little circle of gold.

PART II

AUNT SUE

‘He was gone from my sight,’ she said, ‘but he never left me. His love has bided with me. He seems nearer and dearer. His love had been so sweet and comforting, and so strong. The ring is small, but it shines, and its light warms my heart.’

‘What did I do with eleven little ones in the bush?’ she repeated my question as one coming out of a reverie. ‘Well, Sue was the eldest, and she was twenty. Sarah came next, and she was

coming nineteen. Jim was the third, and he was seventeen. So I said, "Girls, you can run the house; I'll go out with the boys and run the farm." And Sue has run the house ever since. She soon ran Sarah out with a husband, and when the other girls grew up, she soon found men for them. Then Sue has had four other girls, like Betty here, raised them and got them men, too. Sue is rough but she is a worker, I can tell you.'

And the old lady laughed as she contemplated Sue's smartness as a bride producer and a matrimonial match-maker.

'But your work out of doors, mother?'

'Why, it was healthy work, and I have never known any real sickness. It was hard work grubbing amongst the rocks and roots. We had long hours in the summer, but we had long hours of rest in the winter. So the good Lord was compensating.'

'Religion, and love, and labour, seem to have been your lot?'

'And what better is there in this world?' said Grannie brightly. 'This world ain't heaven, but a life full of love of God and the love of friends and of honest work, as far as I know, brings us nearest to heaven on earth.'

'You have had pretty good measure of each.'

'I have—Gospel measure—well shaken, pressed down, and running over, and I'm a happy, healthy old woman now.'

'You must have had many a trying hour amidst your early struggles?'

'Not so many as just now with my well-to-do daughters and sons and my rich grandchildren. They are all set on getting me out of the bush and into their fine houses. I can't bide their carpets and rocking chairs. They may be made for them, but I'm not.'

Aunt Sue ushered, or rather drove us all to dinner. Big plates of white meally potatoes and exquisitely poached eggs were there in abundance. Beside these there were piles of beautiful home-made bread and the richest of butter.

'A dinner fit for a king, if he has an honest stomach,' declared Aunt Sue.

'Grannie has been telling me that you had a happy time in the woods, Aunt Sue,' I said when the serious part of the meal was over.

'She has, eh! Well, mother just sees a glint of gold on her finger, remembers father, and forgets all the rest.'

'Rather happy, isn't she?' I suggested.

'Sure, sure; but she has had it hard, real hard,' said Aunt Sue, emphatically.

'No, Sue may have had it hard inside, but the boys and I always managed well outside,' declared Grannie.

'Sometimes she'd come in with her hands and arms swelled with rheumatiz, or she'd be covered with sleet and ice, or soaking to the skin,' pursued Aunt Sue.

'They were exceptions,' said Grannie.

'They came pretty often in the early years, I can tell you. And regular hard work in the fields,

grubbing and hoeing and weeding, cutting wood and doing everything that any man is called on to do on a bush farm. It was nip and tuck for many years after father died, I can tell you; but mother never flopped once. The boys would cry and I'd coddle them and dose them. The girls were all babies and gave plenty of care, but I've made women of them all, and they are well fixed now—all, except poor Jennie. She and her husband got burned out last summer, house and barn, crop and all, poor things. But we sent them over a hundred dollars, and they have a shack up and will soon be all right.'

Sue then dismissed us to the parlour. 'Betty wants to do up the dishes,' she said in excuse.

The parlour was a large-sized room, with a rag carpet on it and littered with papers.

'There!' exclaimed Aunt Sue, 'I hain't been in this room since those children were here playing thrashing-machine. These papers,' she said to me, 'were the straw and the chaff. I don't know what they did for wheat. The sofa was the thrasher and they pounded it well. They had a merry time, I tell you!'

And she laughed as she thought of their fun, and as she rapidly gathered up the scraps and righted the furniture.

'You don't mind them knocking your things around,' I said.

'Not a bit. If I did I'd put the things out of their way. There are pegs on the wall to hang the chairs on. Anyway, I'd rather have broken

furniture than stupid children, or to make the children feel unwelcome either. And none was more eager to get to Grannie's, or to romp and tear around, when she was little, than was Hetty,' she added, with a twinkle at my companion; for Aunt Sue had a pretty good idea that that little lady was greatly put out at my seeing such an upset house.

'Thinking of Jennie and George reminds me of the time when we nearly lost the little things,' said Grannie.

We settled down to hear the story. Aunt Sue had thrown the last of the papers behind the sofa, and now she sat down with a plump. Her figure was bolt upright, and her lips were in that position sometimes called 'pursed.' She was prepared to hear Grannie to a certain point.

'Jennie, the dear, I suppose was eight years old,' began Grannie, 'and George was thirteen. Sue was with them in the berry patch, and some of the other children. They had picked two buckets of berries when there was a cry of "Bear, bear!" Then they took to their heels. Sue grabbed the berries and ran for home, calling to the boys to look after the girls. The older ones went tearing by us, that is by Jim and me, for we were hoeing in a field, and they yelled "Bear, bear!" as loud as their good sound lungs would let them.

"Where's Jennie?" I asked them.

"George is bringing her," shouted Sue, holding to her berries and making for the house.

'Jim dropped his hoe, ran to the house for his

gun, and hurried along the trail to the berry bush. He found poor Jennie had sprained her ankle in her hasty flight. George, like a good boy, had got her on his back and was doing the best he could to get her away. But the bear was too close, so he put her into a crack in the rock and stood in front of her with a stick, yelling and fighting off the bear until Jim came up and shot it.'

'Just as usual,' exclaimed Aunt Sue. 'Mother never tells that story right. Jim shot the bear all right, but she had her hand in it or there might have been no George or Jennie to-day. When Jim came to the house for the gun, she took off to the bush with her hoe. The bear seems to have been so taken up with George and Jennie that he did not see the fury descending from behind. And it was too late to see anything after the hoe began to flourish around his eyes and ears. Jim came along then and finished the bear. He and George carried Jennie home and then went after the bear with the stone-boat, and I served them with raspberry jam and bear steaks, for some time after.'

'Well, you weren't lacking in ready pluck, Sue,' said her mother, and on looking at Aunt Sue I found her large happy face had become as red as a poppy and her upright position had suffered a collapse.

'How was that?' I asked.

'Oh, it was nothing,' Aunt Sue protested. 'Mother, don't tell that story. I'll leave the room if you do.'

'Well, leave the room, if you've a mind to,'

said Grannie, coolly, 'I couldn't hinder you if I wanted to.'

But Aunt Sue did not leave the room. It was the pleasantest thing in her life for her to hear Grannie tell that story.

'It was this wise,' began Grannie, deliberately, with twinkling eyes. 'We had a fine young fellow come and take land near us. We offered to make friends with him, that is, Sue did, but he was a bit shy and proud. He told us afterwards that he was waiting for some one to introduce us. Well, the introducer came along, but he was not just exactly the kind I think that he had expected. One summer's day, after he had had a swim in that river you saw coming here, he had just got on his shirt when he heard a rattle and a whiz! And a big snake had grabbed the end of his shirt tail. He was so scared that he took to his heels and ran, and then he yelled and yelled. But there was no one near. He did not know what to do. He dared not stop, for the infuriated snake would bite him. Through the bush and over the fences he ran and came to our place. "Knock off the snake! Knock off the snake!" he yelled, with his bare legs carrying him as fast as they could, and the shirt-tails and snake a-streaming out behind. The girls were all outside in the garden when he ran up, and when they saw the poor chap the sillies fell to screaming and ran into the house. The fellow ran around the house yelling, "Knock off the snake! Knock off the snake!" Sue came out, broom in hand, to see what was the matter. When she saw the young

fellow, and he was near done out by this time too, and couldn't say a word, he was that dry, Sue just took after him as hard as she could go. And, swish! Down that shirt-tail her broom came, caught the snake on the head, and smashed it to dough.

'The fellow grabbed a stone and pounded the snake's head to nothing, though there couldn't have been much left after Sue's swipe. He then thanked Sue for her timely rescue and ran home. But that night he was back again, dressed neat and fine, and he up and made love to Sue.

"'I'm too busy to bother with gettin' married," says she, "but there's Sarah. She's fine and ready."

'So Henry turned his attention to Sarah, and he married her. You may go and see the Proud Henry—he was called that before Sue knocked the snake off his shirt-tail, but not afterwards—for he is working in the field over there. It was from him that I got this place. It's the nearest I'll go to living with my children.'

'You do not believe in going to live with them?' I queried, to draw her out.

'Not a bit of it. You can't put old wine into new bottles, no more than new wine into old bottles, without doing damage. Old folks in young one's houses are apt to be in the way, to be old fogies and cause other mischief than just being a burden. The more attractive they are, the more mischief they are apt to get into. No, no, it's time enough to take off your shoes when you

go to bed. It has ever been "Hurrah for Grannie's," at Christmas time. And Grannie will always have a place and a welcome for them. When they are too rich and fine for old bush digger Grannie, they can stay away.'

'You know that will never be, Grandma,' said Mrs. Middlebrook, who felt the sting of Grannie's remark. She threw her arms around the old lady's neck and kissed her tenderly.

'But we want you to live in comfort, Grannie. Then when you get sick we want you to be near the doctor and the nurses,' she added, quickly.

'Comfort and doctors and nurses!' exclaimed Grannie. 'I have them all here in this house, and in Sue.'

She was incorrigible. There were tears in Mrs. Middlebrook's eyes.

'Never mind your old Grannie, dear. She's an independent old thing and likes her own home and her own way, and the thoughts of him that's gone. The dear Lord will soon call me home, where there'll be no partings, either sudden or lingering. And you and Will must be there too, Hetty,' she added, tenderly, as she drew her well-gowned grand-daughter to her breast.

'By the way, Grandmother,' said I, when I could command my voice, 'I suppose now that you have just purchased this new place and built this new house, you will be wanting some money.'

I took a fat wallet from my pocket. Grannie Wilkes straightened up a minute, all tears were brushed aside and she was alert.

'George has sent you two hundred dollars with his love, by me,' I continued, handing her a roll of bills.

'And you can take them back to him with my love,' said Grannie, pushing back the money. 'Thank him kindly and tell him that the place is all paid for. Why, the whole lot are against me, George now with the rest. Now it is a present of fine china-ware—to be kept from children's breaking. As if I could care more for china-ware than for dear, happy children! And then it is a lot of varnished chairs, that one would fear to scratch. And now it is money! Why, last Christmas George sent Sue fifty dollars, and I'm sure she hasn't spent the quarter of it yet. We sent a hundred to Jennie, and I'm sure there's twice that much yet in the Post Office Savings Bank—and that's more than enough to bury old Grannie. I'm not for keeping money that'll do me no good, nor for having it that folks will be running after me either to beg or steal it.'

'You might do a lot of good with it,' I suggested.

'Well, George is younger and he will know better where to put it than I. I'll warrant he'll tell you where a dollar will go farthest in the Lord's Kingdom; yes, a lot farther than I can.'

All my efforts to persuade her to keep the money or to force it upon Aunt Sue were unavailing. So I had to carry it away, to the infinite delight of Mrs. Middlebrook.

'You see what it is to be set back by her,' she said a little viciously, as she gloried over me.

'I hope that George will forgive me,' I said, meekly.

'Of course he will. He knows Grannie, or he ought to by this time. Well, I hope that you are satisfied with your interview.'

'Leaving out her rebuff, I am perfectly. You must feel proud of such a grandmother. She is a character, but she has a character, and that is the richest heritage of to-day.'

XXII

CHARLES GORDON, BANDMASTER

HANDSOME young Bandmaster Gordon, in his suit of blue and gold, walked across the platform before the immense and applauding audience. In his hand was the medal of the victor of the great tournament of fifty brass bands. To the amusement of some, and the intense interest of all, he pinned the medal on the breast of a little grey-haired woman who sat in the first box. The young man leaned over and most affectionately kissed the lady on her forehead, saying as he did so—

‘To you I owe it all.’

‘Not quite all, my protector,’ she smiled amid her delight.

‘She deserves it,’ I heard an elderly and clerical-looking gentleman behind me say. ‘God bless her! If it hadn’t been for her he might have been a common day labourer to-day.’

‘If it hadn’t been for him, all her hall carpets would have been spoiled and house torn down perhaps, too,’ rejoined his wife.

‘You know this handsome young bandmaster?’ I broke in.

'Certainly we do, sir,' said the man, looking knowingly to his wife. 'And the lady too, as I said before, God bless her. I was their pastor.'

'Who is she?' I asked.

'She's a music teacher, and gave that young Captain Gordon his first lessons in music and paid for his higher music, which she couldn't teach herself.'

'Paid for his music! Is he related to her?' I asked, in some surprise.

'No, not at all,' said the man.

'But he's her protector,' said the woman.

'This is somewhat strange,' I said. 'Will you not tell me about it?'

While refreshments were being served my friend began—

'Well, you see it was this way: Charley was a son of a poor widow. His father had been bandmaster of our town band. He was a good fellow too, but he died of a consumption and left his widow, with little Charley, very poor. But she, poor thing, stuck to her little home, kept her boy and worked hard, doing all the odd jobs she could get—sewing, nursing, and washing. Charley early showed his bent. He liked music and was often in old Foxey's store, watching the old chap fixing fiddles, fifes, drums, and every other thing that had music in it, from a Jew's harp up. Well, Charley got to be of use to the old man, who got a bit interested too. He helped Charley rig out a fife and drum corps. It was a caution to see Charley drill those little chaps. He had more

polish to-night and a little better baton in that whitewood stick, but I do not think that he has any more music in him or any more enthusiasm than he showed in old Foxey's back yard as he schooled and drilled that little band of his.

'Well, one Hallowe'en he planned to serenade the mayor and aldermen. By the way, I was forgetting another encourager Charley had. This Miss De Laney, whom you saw to-night—well, she thought there was no tuner or fixer of music instruments like old Foxey.

'She was an odd one. Anybody who didn't care for music or didn't stop through while a piece was being played, no matter if it was only on a hand organ, she had no use for them. One day she stood by a German band on a street corner to hear their piece through and wouldn't speak to the mayor's wife as she drove past. Yes, sir, I saw that myself.

'Well, as I was saying, she visited Foxey's on business. One day young Charley had his band out in Foxey's back yard, because the fifes and drums were always kept in Foxey's store—Foxey only lent them. While practising away, along came Miss De Laney. She looked over the fence and watched Charley through the whole performance. Then she gave him a dollar and went into the shop.

'Well, sir, when that Hallowe'en night came, Charley had his boys in pretty good shape, and the town was not a little proud of Charley Gordon's fife and drum corps. You see, music

was born in him. He'd never had a lesson in his life. Foxy knew nothing of book music, no more than my cat.

'When the night came Captain Charley, as he was called by the boys, marshalled his men and led them through the streets to a lively air, up to the mayor's residence. After serenading him, the aldermen were visited, and then others whom Charley had marked out.

'There was another party of boys who were not so peacefully minded. Their plans were deeper and darker. They lifted gates from their hinges and carried them to the mill pond or hung them in trees. They pulled down signs, and in rare cases put them up again. They, however, did not put any sign up in the place where they found it. A sample of the work they did was to take Spinster Cooley's sign, which told of the artistic ability and millinery skill of that young lady of questionable age, and hang it in the place of Bachelor Jimmy Brown's sign, which told of the tonsorial accomplishments of that genial advocate of single-blessedness. Then Brown's sign was tacked on Miss Cooley's shop.

'After gates, signs, and other movable furniture around the town were placed to suit the boys, and they had so far out-witted the constables, their blood seemed to be warmed up for more desperate work. Charley Gordon's band was serenading people and getting apples and pies for their trouble, and these fellows thought that they ought to receive similar treatment. While

they knew that they had nothing good to offer, they thought that threats would count for something.

'They raided some open gardens in the outskirts of the town and got old cabbages, pumpkins, and other truck to litter the doorsteps of eccentric or unpopular people. They determined to go boldly and tell the people what they intended to do if they did not hand out a basket of apples and every pie they had in the house. In coming to this conclusion they did not decide to visit the mayor and the aldermen. Boys that do such things are cowards and attack none but the weak and unprotected. So it was on this Hallowe'en night.

'The Misses De Laney—one you saw to-night and Miss Julia, a younger sister—were two quiet little old maids, of nice tastes and unobtrusive ways. They carried on a private school in the beautiful home their father left them. As it was some distance in from the street, well sheltered by trees, and was protected only by the owners and a little maid, it lent itself an easy prey to the rough boys.

'Two or three ruffians went to the door and presented their demands for apples and pies. The frightened maid called to her mistress. When Miss De Laney heard the request, she flatly resented it and closed the door in the boys' faces.

'This prompt refusal roused the boys to white heat, and they prepared for war. A shower of cabbages and pumpkins was hurled at the door.

Not satisfied with this, some of the boys got big stones and broke in a couple of panels of the front door. These openings became targets for the vegetable missiles.

'To the smart rat-tat-tat of the drum Charley Gordon and his band came down the street. Charley thought it would be pleasant to visit the Misses De Laney and serenade them. He knew that they loved music and he had not forgotten Miss De Laney's visit to his practice. So now, when he had his band out serenading, Charley determined that they should not be passed by.

'As Charley came up he saw the hall door broken, and, in the light that streamed toward the street, he saw the actions of the town roughs. He at once realized the situation, gave a call to the boys behind him to come quickly to his help, broke rank and ran into the crowd. Using his fife as a club, he struck out right and left. The attack was so sudden that it was some time before the cabbage-throwers realized the situation. Charley's men were with him, and in a short time the rascals were driven from the house.

'Though defeated in the unexpected attack, the cabbage-throwers re-formed and came back. Their precious cabbages and pumpkins they had forgotten in their hasty flight, but there were stones on the road, and these they freely used. Charley's men fought bravely. One of the stones thrown by a powerful fellow came crashing into Charley's face, stunning him and cutting his face badly. Several others were also hit, but before the

little band was driven from its ground, the town constables and some others of us, hearing the noise, came running up and the cabbage-throwers ran for their lives.

'One of the constables went to Miss De Laney for water to throw in Charley's face to bring him round. When that lady heard what he had done for her, she ordered the men to bring him into her house and with her own hands she waited on him. She soon had him conscious and resting comfortably. The other boys, who were not so badly wounded, laughed at their bruises, though some were days before they were healed. They were proud of Charley and their rescue.

"Pretty serenade that," said Drummer Jack.

"Charley was a brave one to tackle house and windows," said Piper Small.

"Charley was a brave one to tackle those hoodlums," said I, as I overheard the boys talking.

"But how can we thank the noble heart?" said Miss Julia, who came up to us wringing her pretty hands.

"We'll leave that to you, miss," said Constable Jones. "He's done you prompter service 'an us constables to-night. We'll make it hot for those chaps when we get them, but we must help you fix up your house."

'Some of the boys gladly assisted in cleaning the mud, stones, pumpkins, and other rubbish out of the hall. Piper Small's father was a carpenter, and he was sent to bring him to mend the broken door. Another was sent to tell Charley's widowed

mother of the noble rescue. Widow Gordon was proud of her boy's brave deed, but it did not take her long to reach his side. She was comforted when she saw him so well looked after, and as he smiled his welcome when she came in. Miss Julia made an ado over Mrs. Gordon, while Miss De Laney forgot her usual reserve and kissed the widow.

'Charley was not removed to his home, but was cared for by the Misses De Laney.

'Poor old Foxey kicked up a terrible dust about Charley smashing his instruments in the Hallowe'en fight. The heads of the kettledrums were smashed, the boys had used them so vigorously and dexterously in bringing them down upon other heads. Nearly every fife had been broken, which showed the vim of the boys and the fury of the fight. Even the big drum did not come off scathless, though Drummer Jack Brown had relieved himself of it and left it by the roadside for safety and secured a fence picket for his weapon of offence. One of the roughs noticed the drum in his mad flight from the constables and could not resist the temptation to give it a vicious kick, putting his foot into it. The explosion brought Brown to the scene before the culprit had his foot disentangled, and when he finally succeeded in getting away, he had to carry some marks of the fence picket that stayed with him for many a day. When the mayor heard of the event, and of the damage and loss that would fall to old Foxey, he sent Foxey a handsome sum to cover his loss. The old man was greatly pleased,

and wished that Charley and his men would break some more instruments if he were to be paid for them at the same rate.

‘Charley once told me that if he had to tell the story of his attack that night once he had to tell it twenty times. Miss De Laney wanted every detail.

‘When Charley was nearly recovered and his mother was on a visit to him, Miss De Laney said—

“He has been our protector so long, Mrs. Gordon, I wish you would let him stay with us.”

“What! Would you rob a widow of her last lamb?” replied Mrs. Gordon, with a smile.

“Well, for that matter, we’d take widow with the son, if she would come,” said Miss De Laney, with her usual emphatic manner of statement.

“But the widow and son can’t agree to that,” said the widow, with a spirit of independence that even poverty could not shake.

“I beg your pardon, Mrs. Gordon,” said Miss De Laney, in a more humble tone, “but your boy has been so good to us we really must do something for him. Is there any wish of his that we can grant?”

‘The sweetness of manner and words quite conquered Mrs. Gordon, and she hesitatingly said—

“Yes; Charley is passionately fond of music, and he has been begging for lessons; but I have all I can do to get enough for the necessities of life. This I have done and can do, but I have nothing for the luxury of music lessons. If you

can please the boy in this line you will receive his mother's blessing."

"Oh, I'm so glad that we can do something for him!" said Miss De Laney.

"I'll be a real bandmaster yet some day," said Charley, looking up in triumph; and Miss De Laney stooped and kissed the happy lad. Then, turning to Mrs. Gordon, Miss De Laney said—

"We can never repay your boy for his kindness to us."

"You are very kind to say so," replied the proud mother.

'So Charley took music lessons from Miss De Laney, and practised on her piano every day. He was a long time, so his mother thought, in getting better. Charley knew why, and his mother had her suspicions, but she did not object. Often she came up to the De Laney home and rested her weary body as she listened to her boy playing.

'Charley stuck to it, and was clever at picking up all that was to be learned about music, and the way he could play was a treat to hear.

'In time he left the De Laney home, but not for long. Charley kept up his music regularly with Miss De Laney.

'The next fall his mother died of heart failure, and Charley was taken back to the De Laney home. The next spring Miss Julia died of typhus fever.

'Miss De Laney said she wanted a change for her health. It may have been so, for she had run herself down caring for her sister, but she had also said that Charley had learned all she knew

about music. She had never been away from home before, and had never expressed a desire to go as far as I knew, and so we had our suspicions that it was all on Charley's account. Anyway, she took him to New York and Germany, where he studied all about musical instruments and music. In three years they came back. Charley was offered the position of inspector of pianos in the big organ factory, which he accepted. He taught some music, but it was mostly band music. He took hold of our town band, which hadn't amounted to much since his father died. He reorganized it, and made it what you saw to-night.'

We had finished our lunch. My friend spoke the last words as we had left the restaurant and were nearing their hotel. We also saw the young bandmaster and Miss De Laney again as they entered the hotel ahead of us. His unselfish devotion was that of an attendant upon a princess, and she was extremely happy in his service.

XXIII

TWO LAMBS

ON one of his trips to the West the preacher stepped off the train at a certain point to fulfill a lecture engagement. Among the people at the station, after the train had gone by, he noticed a tall, prominent figure, of straight, military bearing, which, in spite of the grey hair, seemed very familiar to him. A second look convinced him that he was right.

‘Good day, Colonel!’ he said, stepping up to the man and saluting.

The Colonel put his left hand in an affectionate way on the speaker’s shoulder, and, removing his cigar from his mouth, looked the speaker in the face.

They had not met for thirty years, and time had wrought great changes; but there was no mistaking each other.

‘Well, I’ll be blessed,’ he said, after a moment’s consideration, ‘if it isn’t our old chaplain!’

‘The same, sir,’ came the reply, with a touch of the military in the tone.

‘Glad to see you, Chaplain. What brings you here?’

'On a lecturing-tour.'

'Sure, you were always up to some scheme, and wanted stamps.'

'My, how white you have grown, Colonel!' exclaimed the Chaplain. The Colonel winced perceptibly.

'Chaplain,' said the Colonel, apparently disregarding his friend's remark, 'you must come and see me.'

'Where do you live?'

'Over yonder,' said the Colonel, pointing in the direction of the Rocky Mountains, which raised their tall forms not many miles away.

'I'll go when I get through my talk to-night.'

'Very good. I'll be here for you.'

That night the Chaplain found himself in the beautiful home of his Colonel, the hero of many a battle.

'My, but the Lord has prospered you, Colonel; He has been good to you,' said the Chaplain, as he entered the Colonel's beautiful home, a home filled with all the luxuries that taste could wish and wealth purchase.

'Yes, got a few things,' assented the Colonel, somewhat indifferently, 'but can't see it's all the Lord's doing.'

'Oh, don't say that, don't say that, Colonel. The Lord gave, the Lord gave——' The Chaplain continued to express his surprise at the material blessings that surrounded his friend, and he persisted in attributing them all to the Great Giver, and at the same time he passed pleasant remarks

upon the rough and hard surroundings that were theirs when they were last together.

The Chaplain wondered why the Colonel's wife did not greet them.

'Wife is not very well, or she'd be here to welcome you,' said the Colonel, by way of excusing her absence.

'Serious?' questioned the Chaplain.

'Oh no.'

The Chaplain then thought the coast was clear; and, seating himself before the Colonel's cosy grate fire, he overflowed with his stories of camp life, of deeds of daring done during the Civil War by the good Colonel and his brave men.

The Colonel was only languidly interested. He was kind in his words, was hospitality itself in his actions, and was even benignantly reminiscent in his stories of days gone by; but the old ring of command and superb self-possession and of victory was gone. The Chaplain wondered why, for his friend seemed to have everything that a man could wish for in this world.

Up with the song-birds in the morning, the Chaplain was out for a walk. As he wandered around the Colonel's beautiful house and through his magnificent gardens, he was even more deeply impressed with the material blessings that surrounded his friend.

At breakfast, with a gentleness and tenderness which made the Chaplain wonder, the Colonel introduced his wife. She was a sweet little lady, much younger than the Colonel. She was beautiful

and accomplished, but, as on the Colonel, so upon her, there seemed to rest a spirit of languidness and sadness, not to say indifference and hopelessness, which was, to the Chaplain, quite out of harmony with their beautiful and luxurious surroundings.

It is true the Chaplain had not been intimate with many millionaires. His friends who had beautiful environment and abundance in store were, for the most part, exceedingly happy, if not boastful, in their possessions. The Chaplain never dreamed that there was such a thing as a surfeit of luxuries and wealth. From his continued struggles with poverty and simple parsonage life, he thought that wealth and comfortable home surroundings should spell happiness—unless when there was some very obvious reason to the contrary.

With wondering spirit he joined the Colonel and his wife at breakfast. Some temporary misfortune must have befallen them. He would cheer them up. So he continued his remarks upon the possessions of his friends, extending his reference from the house and its furnishings to the garden and its glories. He complimented the Colonel upon his wife, and told her of days and surroundings much different from the present peace and luxury.

With a touch of impatience the Colonel said—for he thought the Chaplain was going beyond bounds, and that his talk was tiresome to his wife—

‘Look here, Chaplain, this house is nothing to us since the light has gone out.’

‘Why, Colonel,’ said the Chaplain, in surprise, ‘what do you mean?’

‘What I say. The light has gone out of this home. For years we had two lovely children; they grew to splendid boyhood and sweet girlhood. We loved them, did what we could for them, and, just as we were settling down to enjoy their love and their company, their lives were snuffed out. Wealth, home, luxurious surroundings are nothing now when the little ones are not here to show us how to enjoy them. They are dead. Our light is gone. Where is your Father’s love in that?’

‘The Lord gave, the Lord gave,’ said the Chaplain, softly and thoughtfully.

‘And He hath taken away,’ added the Colonel’s wife, with a sigh that was tearless and hopeless, as she quietly resumed her seat.

‘Blessed be the name of the Lord,’ said the Chaplain, bravely and reverently.

The Colonel made some impatient remark under his breath.

‘Colonel, where is the Book? I must have family prayers with you,’ said the Chaplain.

A servant brought in a Bible, and handed it to the Chaplain.

Prayers being concluded, the Colonel said almost abruptly—

‘Chaplain, you used to be a good horseman; would you like to take a ride over to the mountains?’

‘With pleasure.’

As the two men roamed the wide prairie fields

between the Colonel's palatial home and the Rockies, the Chaplain asked the Colonel—

‘Who owns this land?’

‘I do.’

‘Mostly pasture land; what do you raise?’

‘Wait a moment, and you'll see.’

In silence they rode on, the Chaplain's spirit almost recovered from his shock of sorrow, as he drank in the pleasure of the ride and thought of the great possessions of his old friend.

Nearing the mountain-side, the Chaplain's attention was directed to a moving mass of white. He had never seen a glacier, and asked whether he now saw one. It seemed as if the whole mountain-side was white and was moving downward.

‘That is a flock of my sheep,’ said the Colonel, by way of explanation.

‘Sheep!’ said the Chaplain, in surprise. ‘Why, I never saw such a crowd of them before. How many are there?’

‘Oh, nine or ten thousand.’

‘What are they doing?’

‘Moving to better pasture.’

The sheep had reached a stream at the bottom of a hill, and were loath to cross. The shepherds tried to drive them, but in vain. The dogs drove them to the banks; but the timorous sheep, on touching the water, whirled away.

‘Hold my horse,’ said the Colonel to the Chaplain, ‘and I'll show these shepherds a trick they do not seem to know.’

Springing from his horse, he threw his rein to

the Chaplain, and strode off to the river. He waded through the water, and then walked along the other bank, like one seeking for something lost on the shore. Presently he made a quick movement. He caught a little lamb and lifted it gently to his bosom. He stooped down again, and after a moment or two caught another lamb.

With a lamb under each arm he came back through the river. He put them carefully down upon the other bank, where the grass was fresh and luscious.

After a few nibbles in the fresh pastures the little lambs missed their mothers, and began bleating. The mother sheep quickly lifted up their heads, and, seeing their lambs on the other side of the stream, they boldly plunged in, and were soon with their little ones. Seeing the mother sheep go, the old bell sheep followed; and after him came the whole flock.

‘There,’ said the Colonel, as he returned to the Chaplain, ‘what do you think of that?’

‘It was grand, Colonel; it is just what the Lord is doing with you. I’d like to preach a sermon to you on that very act.’

‘I think you have been preaching to me ever since you saw me,’ said the Colonel, bluntly. ‘But go ahead. I want you to tell me first, though, how my handling these sheep is like the Lord’s dealing with me.’

‘Well, Colonel,’ said the Chaplain, thoughtfully and tenderly, ‘it is just like this. There were those sheep. They had been feeding upon the

mountains until they got all the good there was there. The shepherd knew there was better and fresher pasture over the river. But at the brink the sheep stopped. They were afraid to trust their guides, and they would not cross until you first brought over those two lambs. The Lord, your loving Shepherd, wants you for heaven. He gave you many things here, and trusted and fed you with good things ; but you have not yet yielded to Him. So now in the same kind spirit, the spirit of love for your sheep that moved you to lead your flock across to better pastures, God has come into your home and taken those lambs across the river. His eye is upon you. He wants you to hear their bleating in heaven and to follow.'

Tears sprang into the Colonel's eyes and coursed down his weather-beaten cheeks.

'Chaplain,' said he, 'you must come right back home and tell that to my wife. She feels the loss, and is as rebellious over God's dealings with us as I was.'

The two men went back. There was a little Pentecost in the Colonel's drawing-room. God met them there, and filled their penitent hearts with His pardon, His peace, and His love.

While the Colonel and his wife were in each other's arms, rejoicing in their new-found faith and hope, the Chaplain slipped quietly away, so that he could catch his train and fulfil his next lecture engagement.

XXIV

THE SUPPLANTER

'**B**LESS the Lord for that boy!' exclaimed Silas Holmes from his invalid's chair. 'He is an heir of faith, a support to his mother, a guide to his brothers and sisters. He is first in mine inheritance. God bless him!'

Silas Holmes' wealth had availed him not in his fight against 'the ills that flesh is heir to.' Home, children and friends were his, but creeping paralysis, with increasing numbness of limbs and weakening faculties, was his also. His faith in God was strong, and he had been a 'bishop in his own house,' leading his family faithfully to the throne of God, and that daily when he was able.

His one weakness, perhaps, was his special fondness for his oldest son. The joy of the welcome of the first-born had sunk deeply in the man's bosom and had grown with his cherished hopes of a noble son, an intimate companion and a support in old age. All that love and wealth could give had been lavished upon that first-born, and in the shadow of the great oak the aspen had delighted to find shelter and to grow.

When the father's sight failed him, he had Edward read the Scripture portion and then he led the family in prayer. Now that he was too weak to pray, he heard, though indistinctly, the sounds of honest prayer, and his soul was thrilled with joy and praise, with faith and hope. His power of speech came back for a moment and he blessed that son, who had led the family in prayer, with a most fervent blessing.

The members of the household heard the words with mingled feelings. The mother was glad to hear her husband speak again; the son, who had prayed, heard the words as a solemn benediction; but the eldest, who had refused to pray, heard the words with a dismay that was soon turned to chagrin and hatred.

Edward came to his father's side after the hour of devotion and his father clasped him fervently, to confirm the blessing he could not repeat. But Edward was still honest.

'It was Thomas, father, who led in prayer, not I,' he said.

The strength left the old man's hand, he grew cold, and a pallor crept over his face.

'I hope that you are not sick, father,' exclaimed Edward, in alarm.

'My son,' he stammered, struggling for speech, 'the blessing I had intended for you has passed to another.' His speech grew clearer and voice firmer. 'Yes,' he continued, 'and your brother shall be blessed, blessed and honoured, for he is worthy.'

‘And is there no portion for me, father?’ asked Edward, his heart bursting with anger, not at his own folly and sin, but at the action of his faithful, godly brother.

‘Yes,’ said the old man, in a rasping voice, ‘a common portion, a portion with sinners, and a place in my tomb.’

Silas Holmes then bowed his head, life ebbed quickly away, and in three days a large concourse of people bore him to his marble mausoleum and laid his ashes to rest.

After an outburst of passionate grief at the loss of his father, Edward hastened to find consolation amongst his gay companions. His mother had turned to him for support, but had found it not. Her second son, Thomas, however, was at her side with acts of love and words of grace and comfort. On him she leaned, and found him strong and true.

At the family table Edward was expected to take his father’s place, but the night of revelry caused him to be late, and to Thomas fell the lot of serving in his father’s place. During the meal Edward appeared and, scorning his brother’s offer to vacate to him, he placed himself in the empty seat, eating his breakfast with pernickety appetite and querulous words. The family waited patiently upon him, and when he was nearly through his meal, his mother brought the family Bible to him.

‘Will you please conduct family prayers, Edward?’ she asked, in her kind, sweet way.

'Don't ask me, mother, I can't,' he said, with a lump in his throat.

'It is your privilege and right. To you we look,' said the mother.

For answer, Edward flung himself out of the room.

It was a trying moment for the family, and many hearts were pained with deep anguish.

For a moment the mother stood, a prayer or a sigh moved on her lips. Then she turned to her second son.

'Thomas, my son, take the Book and be the bishop in our house. We must cling to our father's God.'

With beating heart, Thomas took the Bible, read the portion for the day, and feelingly and reverently led the doubly stricken family to the Throne of Grace.

In due time the father's will was read. There was the formal preamble, and then the portion allotted to the widow. After this came the declaration: 'To him, my son, who shall be the bishop in his father's house, my true son and heir, I give, devise, bequeath the chief portion of mine inheritance, herein and hereunder specified.' Then followed a detailed account of that portion. To each of the other children was given a goodly inheritance, but in comparison with that of the principal heir, their portions were small.

As he understood the purport of the will, Edward realized that he had lost his inheritance, and he was almost crazed with grief and anger.

He rose abruptly and left the room. Thomas followed him quickly, and met him in the hall, as he was hastily putting on his overcoat.

‘Don’t tear yourself away, Edward. It is not too late for you to claim your right as the oldest. Do and be as father wishes and it is yours.’

‘Let me out,’ said Edward, bitterly. ‘You have supplanted me at mother’s side and at the family table. You’ve got the hearts of the children, too; for they listen to you and not to me. And now you have got father’s fortune also. Haven’t you got enough? Get out of my way, you whining hypocrite; get out of my way and let me out!’

Thomas had planted himself between Edward and the door, determined to reason, to argue, to plead with him. He was prepared to sacrifice all, if necessary, that he might win his brother, but when Edward challenged the purity of his devotion and called him a ‘hypocrite,’ his heart was chilled. The common ground for argument is honesty, and this Edward had swept away. Thomas stepped quietly aside, and Edward hastened out of the house.

Thomas walked slowly back to the lawyer, who was chatting with his mother, brothers, and sisters.

‘Can we not have the will changed?’ asked Thomas.

‘Why?’ demanded the lawyer and Mrs. Holmes almost together.

‘Because Edward has refused to come up to father’s conditions for the first share, and rather

than have any preference, I would have us each share alike.'

'Take what father has given you, Thomas,' said the mother, 'and be thankful.'

'Oh, mother, do not say that. Edward is your first-born. It is only by accident that I have done what I have.'

'It is by your accepting God's grace, which Edward has determinedly opposed,' said his mother, calmly and firmly. 'Your father has ordered well, accept his will.'

'I cannot, mother. Can nothing be done, Mr. Lawyer, to change this?' demanded Thomas.

'As all the members of the family are participants in this will, the property cannot be legally divided until the youngest is of age,' said the lawyer to Thomas. 'So you may postpone your decision and judgment until the final settlement. Your mother is the sole executrix, and may use the income as she pleases in the mean time.'

'Well, let it rest there,' said Thomas, hoping that his brother would return and claim his own.

Edward stayed away as long as his money and credit lasted, and then he came back and demanded more money of his mother. She faithfully reprimanded him with regard to the course he was pursuing, and urged him to find a useful place for himself in society.

'It was wrong of father to treat me as he has,' he complained.

'It is very wrong of you to speak as you do of him, and it is wrong of you to neglect us as

you have. If you had only been what your father had a right to expect of you, you would have received your father's property and your father's blessing.'

'It's a trick to do me out of my right.'

'In every word you utter and every act you do, you abundantly prove to me the wisdom of your father's action. You are heaping pain upon my own heart. Oh, Edward, why do you act so? It is neither manly nor Christian. Is is selfish and sinful.'

'Who told you that I was sinful?'

An arrow pierced that mother's heart. She bowed her head in bitterness of soul.

'Who told you what I have done, or where I have been?' he demanded rudely. 'Is it that sneaking brother who has prayed himself into my fortune?'

'Edward, as you have a spark of manhood left, even if you have no love for either the dead or the living, do not speak to me that way about any member of my family.'

The mother had risen to her full height, and spoke with a strength and dignity that might become a queen.

Edward was silenced for a moment. 'Give me a thousand a year, mother, and you needn't worry about me any more.'

'I cannot help but worry about you. We all love you and crave your companionship. Your father loved you passionately; you were the apple of his eye.'

‘Why did he cut me off, then?’

‘Let me say it once again, though your wicked heart will not accept the truth; if you are cut off, it is you yourself who will do it.’

‘Trust Tommy to drop his claim,’ he sneered.

‘Now, not another word like that or I shall not do as much for you as I have purposed.’

Edward straightened up and pressed his lips together as a prisoner receiving sentence.

‘Your room in this house,’ continued his mother calmly, ‘will still be yours, to come in and go out as you wish, and I shall allow you fifty dollars a month until you are ready to start up for yourself. Then we will consider your needs.’

‘It’s mean and cruel to treat me in this way,’ protested the young man, tears of chagrin and humiliation springing into his eyes, for he saw his sinful pleasures sadly curtailed.

‘And let me tell you,’ added his mother, ‘I thought that twenty-five dollars a month was ample allowance for you, but your brother Thomas pled with me to make it fifty. It is not what your father allowed you, but it is abundant for all the needs you have. Now go and act the man. Be worthy of your father’s love.’

Edward slunk out of his mother’s presence, no word, no action of thanks for her consideration; no thought of her, or of the family cares in his mind. He hastened to his room and hid himself there for a long time. He could not face his companions with the humbling facts, that he who had hoped for a large fortune, was now cut down

to a beggarly fifty dollars a month, and withal ordered to prepare to earn life's bread for himself!

In the midst of her loneliness and sadness, Mrs. Holmes turned again and again to Thomas. He was a bright young man, and a diligent student at the University. In helping his mother manage the estate, his business faculties were called into action, and he rapidly developed into robust manhood. He was greatly respected by all who had dealings with him, and a brilliant future was promised him in the business world.

Faithful at his father's altar, the truest and fullest confidant and adviser of his younger brothers and sisters, he became more to them than a brother. In being true to those of his household, Thomas had tasted of the joy of winning souls to Christ and longed to spend and be spent in His divine service.

His mother wept for joy when he told her of his dearest wish. But friends tried to dissuade him. Into law or business he ought to go, they urged, to help his mother to manage his father's estate.

'Surely I can help mother as much being a minister,' said Thomas, 'as I could if I became a lawyer or banker.'

And into the ministry Thomas went. His zeal, fidelity, and efficiency were abundantly tested, and they brought forth fruits, the gathering of which will be in eternity. In the estimation and appreciation of the Church he steadily rose, and positions of influence and honour were entrusted to him, in

all of which he did grand work for his Master, and increased in the love and esteem of his brethren.

The great bitterness of his life was the steady decline of his older brother, Edward. The darling of his father, he was out of touch with the rest of the family, and, losing his father, he had lost the only tie that had kept him from fulfilling the desire of a treacherous heart and the suggestions of foolish, gay, and sinful companions.

His vices grew with indulgence, and his health was eventually broken under the strain. He was tenderly cared for, but sin had entered, and now struck a blow at the very 'king of mansoul,' the reason. Edward's mind was overthrown. In a beautiful private hospital, where love and nature and skill might do their perfect work, they placed him, and daily pleaded with God for his recovery.

The years came and went with regular pace, pushing the blade into the stock. The youngest child of Silas Holmes was now of age. Most of the older ones have happy homes of their own, living lives that bear testimony to the tact, love, and Christian fidelity of their 'bishop' brother. They all gather home at his call. The time of settlement has come.

The lawyer again reads the will. The estate has increased manyfold because of the wise management. All clamour for Thomas to take his share. He accepts, but then and there redistributes it so that each and all have an equal share of the father's estate, a full share being set

aside for the care of the unfortunate one, whose name is barely mentioned.

In the strength of his manhood, a power in the Church of his choice, honoured, beloved, trusted, Thomas, the supplanter, is still, as he has ever been, his mother's counsellor, support, and comforter, and his brothers' and sisters' truest friend.

XXV

THE WALL OF PARTITION

I

FATHER AND SON

‘**M**ARY, why don't you reprove that boy?’
said Mr. Theodore Jarvis.

The mother lifted her eyes from her sewing, heaved a sigh, and surveyed her husband before speaking.

‘Why, Theodore,’ she said deliberately, ‘George is not a boy now.’

The man, into whose head white hairs had been making great conquests amongst the brown, gave a little start.

‘Not a boy now,’ he mechanically repeated.

‘Why, no, dear. He is seventeen years old. He's a young man now, but you speak of him and think of him as a child still in his long clothes or petticoats, when, after a romp with him in the evening, you used to say, “Here, mother, here's your boy. Hear him his prayers.”’

Mrs. Jarvis felt that she had had a grievance for a long time, and that she had been bearing the real burden alone. To-night, however, she spoke

out more plainly than had been her wont ; and, having spoken, she heaved the sigh that had become habitual, and lapsed into the silence which denoted that she thought that she would have to continue to bear the burden of the boy's guidance, with its necessary restraint and reproof.

Theodore Jarvis, however, had been deeply touched. The evening paper fell out of his hand, his cigar went out, and he sat long in his chair, deep in thought. He had married Mary Griffiths, believing that, as she was a woman of exalted motives and warm affection, she would make an ideal mother. When little George arrived, his cup of rejoicing seemed full, and many a delightful hour he spent with the little fellow. He romped and played with him every evening, but invariably closed the entertainment, as Mrs. Jarvis had remarked, with, 'Here, mother, here's your boy. Hear him his prayers.'

Theodore would go so far, but no farther. He most ardently believed in religion. He showed that in the choice of his closest companion ; but when it came to uniting his forces with hers to guide the boy, he halted. So the foundation of the wall of partition was laid—between him and the boy.

Theodore Jarvis had generous ideas of boy-life, and so young George had an enthusiastic companion in rambles through the parks, and on holidays, on visits to the country, fishing expeditions, or attendance upon ball games. His father always outrivalled him in applause and

appreciation of the virtues of the sport or the points of the game.

Many a time the conversation had verged upon matters of higher, and even of the highest, import; but Theodore steered by them as if they had been a Charybdis or a Scylla, and the puzzled boy, tossed between questions of life and religion, had an added question, and wondered whether his father, in leaving these subjects all to his mother, considered sport the real thing, and these others only fit for women to talk about. Still these things pressed him every day, and sometimes he came to look upon his father as a hypocrite or a trifler. Many a time he wanted to know what his father thought of certain things, delicacy restraining him from talking of them to his mother. In the height of his desire, he had determined to throw himself, if need be, at his father's feet, that he might get close to his heart; but when he met his father, the wall of partition seemed larger, stronger, colder. So the boy had remained silent.

College came after the public school. But Theodore and George had their holidays, and both enjoyed them, in a way. While Mr. Jarvis was silent in expressing himself to his boy, George was impressed by his regular, consistent, religious life. He believed that his father was a good man. He was ready enough to lay down his business principles to his employees and also to expound his religious belief to the objects of his philanthropy. Unknown to his father, George had heard some of these 'unter vier augen' lectures, and they

had become fibre in his soul. Of others he had been told. A dissatisfied and deceiving beggar, who had received a good lecture instead of an alms, had sneered at George, cast aspersions upon his father, and then pitied the boy.

‘You, doubtless, get more of these curtain lectures than I do, you poor thing.’

For a reply George gave him a sound cuffing, a lecture that rang in the parasite’s head with more effect than his father’s.

After this George was more impatient with his father.

‘He thinks more of a puppy clerk in his warehouse,’ he declared indignantly, ‘or a good-for-nothing beggar, than he does of me, his son. These he will talk to, instruct, and help; but as for me, I am only fit to be a companion of his sports, a thing to play with or to amuse! He casts his pearls before these swine that heed him not, but to me, who would gather them and treasure them, he offers none.’

Of course, this judgment was short-sighted, not to say wrong; but it was the conclusion of a youth, who felt robbed of a father’s truest gift—his loving counsel.

Thus impatience and heedless judgment, on the boy’s part, hardened the wall of partition, yes, and widened it, so that the boy sought no more to break it down.

The incident that had caused the father to call the mother ‘to reprove that boy’ was a lively escapade that had set the town laughing.

Old Flanders, a crusty old bachelor and a near neighbour of Mr. Jarvis, had a very fine orchard. Of this he boasted rather loudly, especially when he had had an extra glass at the saloon, and, as a consequence, he had had some of his choicest apple trees stripped each fall.

This year he had purchased an ugly, cross, brindle bull-dog, and more loudly than ever declared that he had defeated the plans of marauders. This boasting led others than mere sneak-thieves to become interested in his apples. On Hallowe'en, Flanders had his ferocious dog tied to a choice apple tree. On his last round of inspection, just before midnight, he found all things right.

'I've fixed them this time, eh, doggie!' he chuckled to himself.

But next morning, when he again visited his orchard, he found the dog with his chain wound tightly around the apple-tree, the ground torn up by the dog's claws, and that very tree stripped of almost every apple. The dog was lying very still, and he poked it with his stick. It was dead.

The old man was in a towering rage. But the more he stormed, the more the people laughed. He had, as it were, thrown down a challenge, and the boys, or some one else, had accepted the gage, entered the lists, and had won.

But he had some sympathizers, and among these was Mr. Jarvis. Instinctively he connected George with this escapade. In this he was right, but he did not know exactly how right he was. For it was George who had told his college chums

of the bull-dog and of Old Flanders' boast. He had organized the Hallowe'en party, had bravely entered the grounds, roused the dog's ire, and had it chase him round and round the tree until the chain was completely wound up. Then, while he tantalized the dog, he had urged his companions to make the best use of their time, which they did to the complete stripping of that tree, the only one they touched.

This having been accomplished, the collegians tossed the dog a bone and left. That the brute died was a surprise to the visitors. That was not in their programme. But they could not enter into the heart of a watch-dog. He may have died of mortification at failing to keep out the marauders or, as is more likely, he may have died of strangulation caused by his desperate efforts to get free from his collar and chain, and attack his tormentors. Anyway, he died and his death caused some repentance.

Mr. Jarvis now thought that George should be reproved, and Mrs. Jarvis had made him feel that he had neglected his duty in leaving all guidance of the boy's life and reproof of his ill-conduct to her.

'I'll do it,' said Mr. Jarvis, relighting his cigar and reaching for his paper.

'Do what, father?' asked Mrs. Jarvis, with a start of apprehension.

'As you say, reprove the boy, Mary. I'm sorry that I have neglected him so long.'

'Do not act rashly, dear, or without giving him good reasons for your reproof. Chastisement, even

with word, given in anger, only sears and bites the spirit, and does more harm than good,' she said hastily.

'Well, Mary, I'm certainly not used to it, but I'll do it or die. George and I are going to find each other out.'

Mrs. Jarvis hardly comprehended her husband's meaning, but, having delivered her warning, she had recourse to her old patient sigh and resumed her sewing.

II

MR. JARVIS MAKES UP HIS MIND

Theodore Jarvis found many difficulties in the way of carrying the citadel of his son's soul and was hardly aware of the fact that most of these difficulties lay in his own mind and heart. Man-like he tried to argue otherwise. He determined to open his heart the next time he met the boy; but when George was in his presence he found it difficult to do what he had determined, and so easy to fall into the old habit of being pleasant to his boy and seeking to take pleasure out of his company.

'Whoever thought that it was so hard really to approach one's son!' he exclaimed to himself, after George had left him. 'George seems more difficult every day. There was a time when his eager little face looked up to drink in everything I said, but now! Oh dear, how supercilious he is! But what

is the matter with me? I cannot brook any wrong word or act in my warerooms, and buyer and clerk are equally open to my censure; still I feel as if I would rather be hanged than talk openly, decently, honestly with my boy. Truly habit is a great sinner, when he is indulged, and I have the wrong habit with George.

“Don’t act rashly, dear,” said his dear mother,’ continued the troubled father. ‘The dear, good soul! I believe that she feared that I would make a storm with snapping coat-tails behind me, such as she has stumbled upon when I was bearing down upon some delinquent clerks.’ And he laughed at himself. ‘No, I shall not act rashly either. For God knows, some do it both ways. They scare the poor youngsters and teach them to hate their fathers. It drives them deeper into transgression, for hatred and cursing of parents are added to their other sins. But if cruelty drives, indifference and softness open the door of sin and encourage indulgence. When the conscience of the child is awakened, he will hate the trifling parent as the other hates the cruel.

‘There must be a right way between the extremes, and if it is not too late, I shall find it. I cannot abide this sense of separation between us. It is not right. It must be cleared away.’

But the more he thought about it, the greater and stronger became the wall of partition.

He determined to consult his lawyer about the matter. ‘He may laugh at me,’ Mr. Jarvis thought, as he was entering the office of Justice Rightway.

So he talked very seriously about his business matters, trying to work the mind of the lawyer into a mood suitable to giving the advice he wanted ; but, in the end, he revolted at the idea of dragging his boy into public, even if that public were only his long-trusted friend and legal adviser. So he dropped that matter completely and had Rightway make out his will.

‘What is the matter, Jarvis? are you sick?’ asked Rightway, noting the agitation of his client.

‘Do I look it?’ retorted Mr. Jarvis brightly, recovering from his dejection. ‘For if I do, I’ll take a holiday and go fishing.’

‘It would do you good,’ said the other kindly.

But Mr. Jarvis was a disappointed man when he left the lawyer’s office. He was no nearer, he seemed to be farther from, the solution of his problem.

That afternoon he took a long ride in his auto-car. The country-side was beginning to look bleak and bare. Autumn’s leaves were fast falling and nature sighed and wailed, as if bemoaning her fading glories. Mr. Jarvis was not a man given to moodiness, and storm and calm, rain and shine, had been the same to him in business. He knew how to meet every season of the year. But to-day he was different. The sadness of nature settled upon him.

‘It’s too late,’ he brooded. ‘The summer is past and the harvest is ended.’

The car swept down a graceful stretch of road. Across the bridge there was a sudden rise, the land

upon the right jutting abruptly and overshadowing the stream. Man had joined with nature in terracing, tree-planting, landscape-gardening, and here was created one of the most attractive 'God's acres' in the land. The white tablets and other monuments made numerous punctuations amidst the everlasting greens of noble cedars, spruces and pines. Here the ravages of the year were less apparent and the scenery was most refreshing.

'Stop at the graveyard, John,' said Mr. Jarvis to his chauffeur.

Mr. Jarvis entered the lovely spot and wandered around aimlessly for some time. At last he came to a grave that riveted him to the spot.

'Why this is Eden Park,' he exclaimed, 'and this is my father's grave. Oh, what a father *he* was,' said he, reverting to the difficulty that rested so heavily upon his mind and would not be taken off. 'How father laboured and wrestled with nature to get us boys a living! Early he made us partners in his toil. We worked with him, thought with him, and learned to pray with him, too. He didn't do it all and always for us or let us grow up dependent upon him. As soon as we were able to do and understand, we were graduated from the swaddling-clothes of dependency into active partnership in life's battles for bread, knowledge and faith. He was one *with* us, and made us one *with* him—in everything.'

A pang shot through his heart and he put his hand spasmodically to his side.

'Oh, that is where I have made the mistake—

my boy is my partner only in sport. He must be partner, sympathizer in everything. He claimed joint-ownership often enough, the boastful little rascal, but I failed to respond and initiate him. Poor boy, he must feel that his father did not trust him as a son—the most intimate, because God-given, of partners. My father trusted us and we were one. God helping me, George will yet be one with me.’

Mr. Jarvis returned to his car, and began speeding homewards. He met his pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Boanerges, and took him into the car with him. Mr. Jarvis told him of his visit to Eden Park and began to expatiate upon the virtues of his father.

‘Yes, brother,’ replied his reverence, ‘there were fathers in those days. I have a great grievance against the parents of this generation. They become fathers and mothers fast enough, by the course of nature; they glibly take baptismal vows and covenants to become nursing fathers and nursing mothers for the Lord, but little do they carry home and enforce the teachings of the pulpit. The young things go their ways, and the parents either restrain them not in the multiplying of their foolishness, or they follow them into the paths of sin. The chariots of the Lord cannot go forward at this rate. Parental neglect is the root weakness, not to say sin, of this day and generation.’

‘But, my dear sir,’ replied Mr. Jarvis, ‘it might be more helpful if we had advice from our religious

teachers, instead of denunciation. Now, take a living instance. I want to do right by my boy, but I cannot see how to better my course. I feel that there is some estrangement, some wall of partition between us. How is that to be overcome ?'

'By being demolished, sir, at once and at any cost. Nothing can be done until that is out of the way. If necessary, humiliate yourself in the dust to win him. God humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death to save us sinners ; shall we not slay false pride to win the love of our children ! Become open, humble, trustful as a child with your son, and, sir, he is yours for ever.'

'Sir, you smash into my heart.'

'You sought advice as an honest man of an honest man. But, friend, in all your dealings with your son, respect his feelings. They are more alive, more sensitive than yours. When Abraham would treat with Isaac, he left wife and home, servants and flocks behind, and they two sought the Mount of God. No young man will resent such delicacy of consideration. There, alone before God, let him or you be sacrificed. God will then answer prayer, find his lamb for offering and save the boy to be, in his turn, a shining light to his generation.'

'Sir, I thank you for your words. May I profit by them,' said Mr. Jarvis, wringing the hand of his pastor, as he left him at his gate.

III

BROKEN DOWN

'We are going to the woods to-morrow, George,' announced Mr. Jarvis to his son that night.

'Why now?' asked George, in great surprise.

'Fishing!'

'But this is not the season for fishing.'

'Hunting, then!'

'The hunting season is not yet open either.'

'We'll find something in the hills to entertain us. Get ready.'

Nothing loath, George made the necessary preparations.

Mr. Jarvis was very quiet while on the train and George noticed it. His father was usually so lively and occupied this part of the journey in looking over his 'flies,' hooks, lines, and other unique inventions for ensnaring the finny delicacies. George took his father's books and boxes of hooks and examined them for him.

'That is right, George; put them in order,' commented his father.

Their guide and canoemen met them at the little station and paddled them up the river. Then came the tramp through the woods at the long portage. Mr. Jarvis generally acted like a young boy let loose from school; but now his silence and quietness of manner were even more marked than on the train. George began to be troubled.

'We have the tackle and the guns, father,' he said; 'but what game can we get now?'

'If we are to bring down any game, George, it will be when we get there,' said his father, philosophically.

They walked on in silence. But George could not long stand it.

'Look here, father,' he said, throwing down his kit, 'what is the matter with you? If you are going to light into me because of Old Flanders' apples, as mother says you are, let me tell you that that matter is settled. We are sorry that the dog choked itself. We made up a purse and sent it to Flanders by Rightway, and the old man said that he wished that he had more dogs to be choked if they would be paid for at the same rate.'

'I am very glad, my boy, that that matter is so amicably settled; but that is a light matter compared with another. Let us go on a little further. The men may hear us.'

George, somewhat relieved, picked up his kit again and followed his father.

'There is a good seat, George. Sit down there,' said Mr. Jarvis, pointing out a large boulder in a quiet, sheltered place.

George sat down and his father placed himself beside him, prepared to argue with him, woo him, or even to humiliate himself before him.

'George,' he said, and the spirit, yes, all the spirits that were uppermost in him, seemed to be in the tone with which he spoke that word. The very sound rang deeply in the young man's soul

and subdued him. He could have thrown himself at his father's feet. 'George, I want you to come into partnership with me.'

'I'll be glad to, father,' he promptly replied. 'I'll be glad to work from the bottom upwards, to do anything to please you.'

The father was almost swept away by this outburst of filial affection. He knew not how much the mother had done to save the boy and prepare him for this very hour.

'And, George,' continued the father, 'I do not want to have any secrets hidden from you; and I do not want you to have any from me.'

'I've often wanted to tell you everything, father, but you didn't seem to want to hear me. It was always, "Run away, George, about your play," as if life did not hold anything for me but play. I told mother what I could, and the rest I've hidden from everybody.'

The father rose to his feet and opened his arms, as a lover might. George sprang into them, and father and son clasped each other in one strong, manly embrace.

'This is the game I am after, my son,' said the father.

'But, father,' said George, 'I've got the bigger bag. I've got an open-hearted father.'

XXVI

OUT OF THE BLIZZARD

‘**D**ON'T take the plains, I beg of you. The sun-dogs have been very vivid, and we're going to have a blizzard.’

‘Yes, Tom,’ replied the missionary, ‘you are kind to regard the safety of your friend, but I have other sheep that I must go and see. If I die, I shall die at my post of duty. Good-bye.’

With this Missionary Foster gave the word of command to his horse and started on his journey. This horse had replaced a couple of little, slow, Indian ponies. Mr. Foster was justly proud of him, and with him he thought he could go anywhere, and through any storm. To-day he had promised to preach at ‘the Bluff,’ about twenty miles south-east of his home. To fulfil his engagement he harnessed his horse to his cutter and, taking plenty of robes, started upon his wintry journey. Ere he left the settlement, on the road that led over the plains, he met one of his parishioners, Tom Watkins, who pointed out the threatening portents, the sun-dogs around the sun. But Mr. Foster thought his duty called him to

make an effort to fulfil his engagement. Then had he not 'Old Bill,' as he called his horse, and he might be well over the twenty miles ere the storm could catch them. So he cheerily answered Tom, pushed on, and was soon on the trail that led out over the plains.

In spite of the fact that Old Bill made good progress, the blizzard was on them with a rush and a roar ere they were half-way to the Bluff. The trail was blotted out in a moment. The driver's eyes and all interstices around his garments and robes were favourite places for the wind to eddy and to pack the flying particles of snow. The only redeeming feature of the blizzard seemed to be that it came from the north-west, and thus the traveller had the wind in his back. If the wind had been in his face no progress could possibly have been made against it. Still, as it was, the furtive gusts seemed at times to come from every quarter of the compass. It was only at very rare intervals that the driver could see his horse.

The driver and horse, however, kept on their way. The cutter would strike a thin layer of ice that was on the top of the snow when it went off the road. This would cause a grating noise and sensation to the driver. By this and by the steady regular blow of the storm, which kept a straight course in spite of the furtive gusts, the traveller was enabled to keep the road fairly well.

Still, he was aware that at best it was mostly guesswork. He was nearly blinded; and great

chunks of ice and snow embedded themselves in and clung to his moustache and whiskers, seriously affecting his breathing. The cold increasing had sent the mercury down below zero to hide among the forties. He dared not stop. If he did, where could he go for shelter? There was not a house between the settlement that he had left and the one to which he was going. Mr. Foster thought, as he felt himself getting colder and colder, and the horse's pace slower and slower, that his days of service were numbered, and that he was to find his last resting-place in a snowdrift and to perish on the plains.

He tried to rouse himself, but it only increased his pains, giving the frost a better chance at newly exposed places, and the wind new interstices to fill with snow.

In a lull in the gale Mr. Foster saw a stack of hay. It was, however, of little comfort to him other than as a landmark, a clear indication that he was on the right road and only two or three miles from the Bluff settlement. He thought to rest a moment on the lee side, but the wind whistled and whirled the snow around every corner. The hay that he pulled out was quickly blown away and scattered over the plains. With small hope of reaching his destination, he again turned his horse to the trail.

The cold settled down with greater intensity. The biting pain in his body ceased, and the missionary thought himself in his old church at home, listening to a grand oratorio or chorus.

'Isn't that grand?' said, or rather moaned, the half-frozen man.

'Hello! Who's here? Who's out in a storm like this?' said a gruff but kind voice.

'What! that's Old Bill, the preacher's horse. Look, there's an icicle at his nose fully two feet long. Poor fellow, he's had a rough time of it. Wake up, preacher! Are you dead or alive?'

The brawny half-breed picked the missionary out of the robes and carried him into his shack, a poplar log-house, and bade his wife and children be quick to bring him back to consciousness.

'I'll tend to Old Bill,' he added.

The wife and children sprang to render what assistance they could, and soon were chafing the missionary's hands and restoring circulation.

When Mr. Foster partly recovered and began to realize his narrow escape, his gratitude was unbounded, and with half-loosened tongue he tried to express his thanks. While so endeavouring, his host, the big, burly half-breed whose name was Jacob McGuire, though generally known as 'Big Jake,' came in. Without noticing what the missionary was saying, or trying to say, he began—

'What were ye doin' with Old Bill out a day like this? It's enough to kill a horse.'

'This—is—my day for—preaching in the settlement, and—and I was not going to disappoint the people.'

'Ugh! I guess there'll be no heap of people out to-day, and mighty little preachin' either, I'm thinkin'.'

'Oh, I'm nearly all right. Your good wife's tea has made me nearly all right again, and I'll go on.'

'Ye'll not touch Old Bill again to-night, d'ye hear? So just stay right where ye are, preacher. I've never gone a step to hear ye nor will I now. But I'm goin' to hear ye, just the same. A man who's got the grit to come out in a storm like this, and when his bones and nerves is squeakin' and pinchin' like mad—I know what freezin's like. Yes, a stabbin' rather than a pinchin'; thawin' out is worse than freezin' in. I say when a man's got the grit in 'im (and I'd never thought it of ye), ye'r wuth the listenin' to. And I'm goin' to hear ye, and right here, too. Ye bide here and rest. Sleep'll be good for ye; if yer poppin', thawin' veins 'll let ye. I'll go and call in the nearest neighbours that'll face the gale, and ye'll preach, if preach ye can, right here.'

Surprise for a while reigned supreme in Big Jake's house. His guest soon sank into slumber, hardly realizing the situation after his first awakening; but the family were alive to the father's attitude. He had often laughed at them for 'goin' to preachin'.'

'What good did you get? It never taught ye how to plough a furrow, or rope a steer, or shoot a buffalo. Why, a twist of tabac, or a mug of whisky that sets a movement in ye, is somethin', but preachin's nothin'.'

Here was this same Big Jake taking the preacher into his home and care, ordering things for his comfort, guarding him like a father, and

even sallying forth to call the neighbours in to hear 'preaching in Big Jake's shack.'

In response to Jake's invitation a number of the settlers ploughed their way through the drifts and came to the appointed place.

When Jake thought that it was time to begin the service he stepped over to see the preacher. With fatherly tenderness he lifted the man, told him that it was time to begin, and while he was getting ready he would 'get some of the chaps to work.'

'You, Brown, you're a bit of a shouter. Hit up a tune while the preacher is a-findin' his legs.'

So Mr. Brown started—

'Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.'

'That's the style,' said Jake, 'only the blizzard's a-howling here, not the sea tempest. Give us another; the preacher is not quite in trim.'

So they sang another and another hymn, Jake always making some comment as to the way the hymn appealed or appeared to him. Then the preacher tottered to his feet. Jake, in a moment, was at his side, and supported him to a chair, the only chair there was in the house. The other people were seated on benches of longer or shorter length, or on some boards fixed on blocks of wood. After he had rested a moment in the chair he stood up, and with Jake's support he remained standing.

By way of encouragement, Jake said—

'Now, preacher, preach ; I'll support ye.'

Then the missionary took up his Bible, opened it, and gave out his text, 'For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.'

He began—

'A certain man on horseback started on a journey over the plains. He had not gone very far when he got mixed up in the trails, and turned from the right one. But he thought he was all right, and so went on getting farther and farther away from the right trail.

'When he was blundering along, a blizzard came, and covered up everything. The trail ahead and the trail behind was all covered over. The snow beat him in the face. His broncho balked when he wanted it to go where he thought was the right way. But it would go with the wind, and he had to give up and let it take him where it would. The cold came down terribly. He was freezing. By-and-by the pain stopped, and he said—

"Isn't this fine? Was ever a man in such a lovely place? Lots of pictures to see; fine music to hear; tables just heaped with pemmican, duck, and prairie chicken, just prime!"

'Then along came a friend, who saw the motionless rider, and feared that he was already frozen to death. He rushed up and tried to help him.

"Man, you're nearly dead!" he shouted, but the man did not hear.

"Come, man, tumble off your horse, and let me try and get some life into you!"

'So he pulled the man off his horse, and began to rub him and get his blood into circulation. When the man came to consciousness a little, he was as mad as an old bear with a bullet in his back, and snarled out—

"Leave me alone. Let me alone. I was having a good time. Fine feast! Leave me alone, I say!"

"Yes, indeed, a fine feast! The feast death would give you. You were freezing to death, and you didn't know it. I want to rouse you, to get you warm again, and lead you back to the trail that you have lost."

'But the traveller only drew his hunting-knife, and struck to the heart the man who would have saved him.'

There was quite a sensation as the preacher paused at the end of his parable. Jake was the first to recover, and said—

'That's quite a yarn. I've been out in a blizzard—lost, too, same as ye—but where's the preachin'?''

'Ah, Jake, that lost traveller is like you and me. We started out on the journey of life on the trail to heaven; but we got mixed up in the trails and were lost. We went on from bad to worse. Our crazy broncho—our body with its passions—led us on and on. It must be satisfied; and so we went to drinking, to carousing, to swearing, to gambling, to Sabbath-breaking, and to God only knows what. The very blizzard of temptation was upon us, and all signs of the heavenward trail

were lost. The cold of sin so froze our senses that we thought we were having a good time and enjoying grand things, when it was only the spell of the devil that we were under. He wanted our souls; so he blinded them, and made good things appear bad, and bad things appear good.

‘When we were nearly dead, then came Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, to seek and to save us; but in our sinfulness we said, “We are having a good time, leave us alone, leave us alone.” But He loved us. He did not want us to die without an effort to save us, so He came to us and took hold of us to save us, but we—we—only killed Him!’

The preacher was standing alone now, firm and erect. Jake had sunk into the chair and was now shaking from head to foot.

‘Oh, Jesus Christ, that’s me, that’s me!’ said Jake, amidst convulsive sobs.

‘Yes, Jake, you are one of those who have lost the trail; but blessed be God, Jesus Christ will lead you back. Yes, lead you back to-day; for He “is come.” He is right here “to seek and to save the lost.” Won’t you hear Him calling through the blizzard, “Come unto Me,” “Look unto Me and be saved”? Look to Him, Jake, and the storm will go. It can’t stand the sun, you know. The Sun of Righteousness is Jesus Christ. Take Him as your Guide, your Sun, your Saviour, your Jesus Christ.’

They all knelt down and prayed. After prayer was over Jake stood up and said—

'Wife, will ye forgive me for the hard knocks I've gi'en ye in the black days?'

Tears sprang into that wife's eyes, and she said—

'With all my heart, Jake, if ye'll forgive my raspin' tongue and snappin' ways.'

'Brown,' said Jake, 'I've a score with ye. I've tried ye and lied to ye. I roped a steer from ye, five years back. Ye can go out and pick from my herd any five I've got nearest like him.'

To which Brown quickly responded, 'As God has forgiven me, I won't do anything of the kind, Jake. I've more cattle'n you; and I was a mean, stingy churl that I didn't know that you and the missus and the little ones was a-starvin' for a bit of meat. No, Jake, I'll not take five, but if ye'll feel the better for it, I'll just take a-one.'

Jake asked the preacher's pardon for his unkindness in days gone by; but the preacher could not speak, he only whispered—

'Let us pray. Jake, you pray.'

And Jake said, 'O Lord, I'd lost the trail and was in the stampede crowd, but, thank the name of Jesus, ye've found me; yes, found the lost, frost-bit Jake and pulled him out of the blizzard. Pull others out of the blizzard, Lord, for Jesus' sake. Amen.'

XXVII

THREE MORE YEARS

I

‘A CUP OF COLD WATER’

‘**T**HERE,’ said Dr. Stokes, clasping his hands tightly behind his back and striding across the room. His noble head was bowed and lines of deep thought and feeling were in his face. ‘There, that is the unfortunate part of our business.’

‘What is, Doctor?’ queried his next visitor, the Rev. William Text.

‘Why, what else than to give the death warrant to a very dear friend?’

‘One whom we all love, Francis Luke?’

‘Yes, he has just been here, and I have given him a thorough examination. He has failed—failed, oh, so rapidly. I can do nothing more for him, and I have told him that he cannot live three months.’

‘Unless the Lord orders otherwise.’

‘We are all in our Maker’s hands, but every

indication points to a speedy departure, and he will leave a host of friends to mourn him.'

'I have just met him, and he has handed me his resignation from the superintendency of our Sunday school.'

'Good! I told him his only hope of prolonging his life was to cut out all indoor work that he could, and to keep out in the open air.'

'And I have told him that if he drops all good work, and is idle in the Lord's vineyard, the Lord will soon take him away.'

While his physician and pastor were talking about him, Francis Luke, a slight, fair-haired, white-faced man, walked with slow but regular steps back to his place of business and climbed into his stool. He was the head book-keeper and confidential clerk of Rowley and Company. He was one of the most important men in the firm, beloved and trusted here as he was in his church and society. But all this love and trust did not feed his wife and child or pay for his expensive medicines. Whatever task he undertook, he bore it conscientiously, faithfully, cheerfully. There was one other grace that entered in the service of Francis Luke that almost beggars description. It was a pleasing winsomeness. It was not any softness. There was too much character and backbone in Francis Luke for that. But this grace gave a touch of sweetness to all his words and deeds that made them peculiarly acceptable and made him greatly beloved.

On hearing of the remarks of the doctor, Mr.

Rowley wanted to relieve Francis of the 'book-work' and make him a kind of inspector; but to this Francis was opposed.

'No,' he said decidedly; 'in the first place you cannot afford it; and in the second, how can I inspect, check, or audit if I do not do the last books?'

He had his way in the office as he usually did, and he stayed at his desk.

'Well,' said Mr. Rowley, 'take all the holidays and afternoons that you want, consistent with your work.'

Francis Luke thanked him.

'My work shall be performed while I am here,' he added.

Mr. Rowley knew that without him telling it, or he never would have expressed words giving him such latitude and making him practically the master of his own time.

Nevertheless, Francis Luke was often compelled to leave the office and seek the fresh air. The increasing weakness compelled him to forego one pleasurable duty and obligation after another. His place in his club, his office in his lodge, were sacrificed; but the hardest of all, he had told his pastor, was to give up his loved Sunday school. He had attended it from boyhood; yes, graduated from the cradle roll to the office of superintendent. But his duty to his home demanded that he should earn his bread and keep them from charity; so he reluctantly surrendered the school.

When Sunday afternoon came he fled from the town. His heart beat hard to go to school again, but his judgment said 'No,' and he hastened away over the hills and out of sight of the church and the town.

His mental struggle had given him greater energy, and he had walked three miles before he realized what he had done. His attention now coming back to his body, he almost sank with weariness; but he struggled on a little farther to a clump of trees and sat down on a log.

Too weary to notice what he had done, Francis Luke did not see a bevy of bare-legged children that had quickly arisen and scampered away, hiding behind the trees.

But one little mortal could not long restrain her curiosity. She looked out and, seeing the stranger sitting so quietly, she approached cautiously. In her journey of survey, Francis Luke saw her. Her dark hair looked as though it had never seen a comb; her short dress was ragged and her legs were bare. Her face was well shaped, and her eyes, black as her hair, were large and luminous and shining with mischief and curiosity; while doubt and fear appeared in every movement. She was ready, at the first alarm, to fly.

'What is your name, little woman?' he asked.

'Little Witch,' she promptly replied.

'That's only your play-name, surely,' he said, as a sweet smile played over his tired features. He had lived so long with childhood that their 'play-world' was close to him. And, much to her

surprise, the little girl lost her fear and shyness in his presence.

'No,' she said, coming up to him, 'it's the only name they call me ; and,' she added, with a sweep of her hand towards the other children, 'most of them kids ain't got any name.'

'Why,' exclaimed Francis Luke, 'where have I got to ?'

'Why, don't you know ? This is what town folks call Irishtown, but we hates 'em and fights 'em.'

Francis Luke knew the place by name, though he had never taken the trouble to visit it. On the outskirts of the town, or rather between the towns, there had grown up a little despised community, such as disgrace many sections of our country, a camp of settled gypsies, or a nest of clannish foreigners ; where ignorance and sin, vice and brutality hold unrestricted sway. No solid farmers were near Irishtown, or their civilizing influence might have been felt ; and it was too far away from the town to be regularly policed. A few weeks ago, however, there had been two dastardly murders in that neighbourhood. A posse of constables had descended upon the place, and seven men had been sent to jail.

But it came as a surprise to Francis Luke that children were in that wretched, sinful, neglected community. He had always thought of it as a nest of villains, thieves, and cut-throats—a nest that should be wiped off the earth. On the books of his Company, these people were black-listed because of bad debts, and no collector could be

hired to go amongst them. Now he had before him one of the neglected children. He was fascinated by her. To see a child was for him and the child mutual and immediate affection. It was true love at first sight.

‘Do you know Christ or God?’ asked Francis Luke.

‘Yep, I’ve heard the names. When the men slap and slash, get drunk and fight, and we kids has to run for cover, we hears them words hard and fast, and lots more terrible things.’

Francis Luke’s heart found refuge from painful distress only in prayer. That little children should be so neglected that those words, so sacred, so suggestive of goodness, sustaining mercy, and saving grace, the name of childhood’s dearest Friend, should only be known in oaths and with words of wrath and anger, and that within such a short distance of the town where they had fine churches, Sunday schools, and Christian homes; yes, and where scores of Christians were rusting for something to do! Francis Luke’s heart was in an agony of pity.

‘You’re tired, Mister, and so white,’ said Little Witch. ‘Will I lead you to the spring?’

‘Here is my pocket-cup. Get me a drink, like a dear.’

She took the shining, silver thing, and ran away as hard as her little legs could carry her. Of the temptation she had to run home with it, Francis Luke thought, but he believed that her better nature, which offered to lead him to the spring,

would rise, and he prayed with all his heart that God would save her. Back Little Witch came with the cup full of clear, cold spring water. It was a great boon to the weak and weary traveller. He drank it with a thankful heart.

'I'll meet you here next Sunday, at this hour,' said Francis Luke. He smiled upon Little Witch and then went away.

Little Witch stood riveted to the spot and watched him out of sight.

II

'THOU HAST REVEALED THEM UNTO BABES'

The next Sunday Francis Luke met Little Witch as he had promised. He talked kindly to her, gave her a little card, and she again brought him a cup of spring water.

The third Sunday some of the other children joined Little Witch, and heard the sweet words of the white-faced stranger. He told them the story of the lost sheep, and gave those who did not run away from him a card.

The fourth Sunday Little Witch had her hair combed, and brought a poor, bedraggled, hardened-looking woman, whom she called 'Mother James.'

The fifth Sunday it rained, but clad in sou'wester and rubber boots, Francis Luke plodded his way over the hills to the meeting-place near the spring. Little Witch was there to meet him. She told him that her mother said he could come and talk to

them in her house. Her father was in jail, and so he couldn't object.

Accepting this invitation, Mr. Luke took his little friend's hand and, like two ducks enjoying the rain, they happily wended their way to the James' home. The house was a plain boarded building, roughly made and still unfinished. It was as innocent of paint as it was of a line of architectural grace. However, it was a place of shelter from the storm. The floor bore marks of a recent spasmodic effort to become clean.

Mother James had three other children besides Little Witch, and the way that little girl 'mothered' her brothers and sister impressed Francis Luke greatly. She put forth heroic efforts to straighten their hair and to clean their faces, so that they might hear the 'white-faced man talk to them good talk.'

Two other women, with four little children and one man, came in to swell the audience. There were few chairs, but benches and boxes were secured, and by this means all were seated. Francis Luke read Isa. liii., and told again the story of suffering, dying love, both sweetly and straightly.

'You'll be comin' back?' queried Mother James.

'Yes, next Sunday at the usual hour,' replied Francis Luke, 'God willing.'

'You can come here whenever you like; that is,' she added quickly, 'if you cannot find a better place.'

'Many thanks for your kind offer. If the weather is fair, we shall meet by the spring; but if

it is not, we shall then accept your kind invitation to meet here.'

'If you don't mind, I'll drive you home,' said the man, stepping up to Mr. Luke; 'the roads is that sloppy, sir.'

Francis Luke looked at the man who had made this kindly offer in a tone of pleading earnestness that surprised him. Mr. Luke was made to feel that he was conferring a favour rather than receiving one.

'Thanks, many thanks, my friend,' said Francis Luke, heartily.

'I ain't much of a friend to no man, but if what you told us to-day be true, I mayn't be too late.'

'God is merciful and gracious and plenteous in mercy.'

'So you say, and you may put it down in your prayers that Tom Jenkins will meet God, if God will meet him.'

'Can you read?'

'Some.'

'Then here's a booklet, "The Way of Life," that may help you. After we start, you must pardon me for not talking. My lungs are so weak that I cannot stand it.'

'That's all right. We want you to come as often as you kin. No one ever thought to do us good before.'

So Jenkins drove Francis Luke home, and when he returned he spent the rest of that Sabbath day studying out 'The Way of Life,' and a good many

hours of the next week were occupied in the same way.

As the next Sunday was fair, Little Witch and her mother, Tom Jenkins and others, an increasing congregation, gathered near the spring. Two gaudily dressed young women came with the rest.

'You ain't got no business here,' said Jenkins to them.

The girls were about to make a rude reply when Francis Luke, who had overheard the remark as he came up, said—

'Don't say that, my friend. Every one who feels his or her need of a new and better way is welcomed. I am sure these young women are anxious to become noble and good. Jesus Christ will help you,' said Mr. Luke, addressing them and shaking them cordially by the hand.

'He's an odd one all right,' said Tom, shaking his head and walking away. 'I thought I'd like him, but I don't want nothin' to do with girls like them.'

Thus rankly does spiritual pride grow in the human heart.

'Where are you goin', Tom?' asked Mother James.

'Goin' home.'

'Why?'

'Why? I ain't goin' to mix up with them Moxom girls.'

'Don't you think they need God's grace as much as you and me?'

'Sure. More so.'

'Then why kick if they're tryin' to get it? You ought to help them along, and not flare up at their spearin' for light.'

'You're right. Guess I'm as bad a sinner as them, after all. God have mercy.'

'Now you're talkin', Tom.'

So Tom went back to the group and heard the story of Mary Magdalen.

As soon as Francis Luke had finished speaking, Little Witch crowded in with a cup of water.

'The first to welcome, and thoughtful as ever,' greeted Francis Luke, heartily.

'I thought that you were forgettin' me,' said Little Witch.

'Never, my dear.'

'I thought Tom was gettin' ahead of me last Sunday,' she said, a little jealously.

'Well, you can walk a little way with me to-day.'

When they were some distance along the road, Francis Luke took a good look at his companion. There were the same bright, luminous eyes and the bare feet; but the hair was well brushed, and while there were many patches on the dress, it was neat, clean, and well mended.

'What do you think about starting a Sunday school, little friend?'

'I don't know nothin' about it, but whatever you do will be right.'

So you believe in me?'

'We all think you're all white. You're the first one that has ever come to us with a kind word.'

All others come for bad or to fight, or to take us to jail; but you are different. You won't stop comin', I hope. I'll die if you do.'

'My time is short, and so we must make good use of it. The doctor says that I cannot live long.'

'God won't let you die until you've saved us,' said Little Witch.

'Did any one say that to you?' asked Francis Luke, curiously.

'No, they didn't. It came right out of myself.'

'I hope that it is God speaking through you, my dear, and your words give me much comfort. God spoke to Eli through little Samuel, and to Naaman through his little maid, and I hope that He is speaking to me through my Little Witch.'

'I'm glad I done you some good. You don't know what you've done for me and mother. We don't know ourselves, and others are changing too.'

III

'OUT OF WEAKNESS MADE STRONG'

Sunday after Sunday Francis Luke trudged over the hills and sowed broadcast the good seed. And his sowing was not in vain. Little Witch told him that she loved Jesus 'most as much as I do you.' Francis Luke was at first shocked, but he told her to press on and learn to reverse it—to love Jesus with all her heart, and then to love him next. Tom Jenkins walked in the light, and his life became an example to all

around him. Mary Moxom's conversion caused considerable stir in the whole neighbourhood. All the tinsel and paper flowers dropped from her apparel. Her life was changed. She had had some experience in other places, and was better educated than her neighbours. All the time that she now could spare from her own home, she spent in teaching Little Witch and other girls to read and write and sew.

With these helpers, Francis Luke thought that he could realize his ambition to form a Sunday school and train some workers ere he was called to the Great Beyond. The people would have no other for superintendent but himself. Tom Jenkins, his choice, might become assistant superintendent, but he, Francis Luke, must be the head while he was among them. He told them of the doctor's words and also of Little Witch's words, and then said that if they would obey, it would not be for long, he would become their superintendent. He must have order if he was going to do the good he wanted to do, and that he had prayed for. They promised obedience. Mary Moxom was chosen secretary of the school. So the school was organized.

The rough children were gathered in, and the process of civilizing and Christianizing them began. There were many outbursts, for they had never been taught to restrain their tempers, their words, or their blows. The girls were as passionate and as difficult as the boys. But the sweet spirit of the superintendent won its way, and order, peace,

and even devotion marked the new Sunday school. The number of older people who became interested and swelled the Bible class steadily increased.

But the course of true love never runs smooth. There were always elements of disturbance and persecution. When Mr. James was released from jail, he returned home unrepentant from his imprisonment and breathing curses upon the laws of the land and upon all mankind. When he saw the change in his home—cleaned, swept, and tidied; his wife combed and neatly dressed; Little Witch and the other children also bearing evidences of careful attention—his anger knew no bounds. He swore, accused his wife of all manner of evil things. His abuse, however, did not lead to blows, but when he heard that a Sunday school had been formed, and that they met in his house, he took an axe and smashed his own floor.

‘They’ll never meet here again,’ he thundered.

Tom Jenkins at once placed his house at the disposal of the Sunday school.

‘It’s not so large as James’s,’ he said apologetically, ‘nor so well placed, but it will do for a while till a better place is found.’

Being a handy man with tools, he also made the offer ‘to build a Sunday school house if the people and Mr. Luke would find the material.’

His three months’ lease of life had nearly expired, and Francis Luke again visited his physician.

‘I cannot account for your improvement,’ said Dr. Stokes.

“He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand,” said Francis Luke, reverently, and with a note of thankfulness and ringing triumph. ‘It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master. It’s the Lord’s doing, and marvellous in our eyes. Come with me next Sunday afternoon,’ added Mr. Luke.

‘I will. I want to see what has wrought this change in you,’ said the doctor, heartily.

A similar invitation was extended to the pastor.

So next Sunday afternoon Dr. Stokes and the Rev. Mr. Text went out to Irishtown.

They saw and appreciated what was done. What attracted the doctor’s attention the most was Little Witch, her attention to the superintendent, the manner in which she dwelt on his words, her manifest love for him. Yet, as he looked around, he was compelled to say that her devotion was only a more striking exhibition of the love and attention which all of the members of the school, young and old, rendered the superintendent.

‘This is wonderful; this is grand. But you need better quarters, Francis,’ said his pastor.

‘Yes; some of us feel greatly cramped, and we would also like a more central place of meeting.’

‘You shall have it,’ said the pastor.

‘And I’ll be the first to subscribe,’ said the doctor.

‘There is at least one ahead of you, Doctor,’ said the superintendent, introducing the doctor to Tom Jenkins, his assistant superintendent.

The words of the minister and of the doctor were told to the people, and the superintendent asked them for an expression of opinion.

There was a chorus of appreciation. 'I say, folkses,' said a shaggy-haired man, called Bill O'Riley, 'can't we build our own schoolhouse? We're obliged to the gentleman just the same.'

'If you can do so,' said Francis Luke, 'no one will be better pleased than I. Manly independence is dear to me.'

'Well, then,' said O'Riley, 'we will.'

'Then I shall give you an organ and, if you will let me, I'll have this girl taught to play it,' said the doctor, indicating Little Witch.

'Oh, thanks!' said Little Witch, clasping her hands together in ecstasy.

'And our church will furnish the school with tables, chairs, and any other thing you need,' put in Mr. Text.

'You are kind, sir,' said O'Riley, with tears of gratitude in his eyes. 'I'm for doin' what we kin, but we're poor folks, just beginnin' to try to do right. We ain't much yet, gentlemen, but we're thankful to God for sendin' our Super here, that's like an angel of light, and we're thankful for your promises. And I'll hope you'll forgive me, Jenkins, for speakin' thanks for the people, which you might have thought your place. I've another idea that I first got up to say. My place is, I'm thinkin', the best place you can get, and you're welcome to the best quarter-acre lot in it.'

'Good!' shouted the minister.

'You'll do,' commented the doctor.

'You'll be seein' the place,' said O'Riley.

'That's business,' said the doctor; 'we'd better go with him, Luke. If you want any money advanced to help on your building, say so, and I'll get it for you.'

'Oh, that's all right, I think,' said Jenkins; 'but if we need it, we'll remember your words.'

Francis Luke bowed his head in heartfelt thanks to God for His wonderful mercies. He had led him into the dark valley, but it had been thronged with mercies, new labours, soul rescues, and wonderful friends. The prayer with which he closed the school that day mentioned these blessings, and all present understood and loved him even more for that touching prayer.

'What is your name, little maid?' asked the doctor of Little Witch.

'Little Witch,' she promptly replied.

'No, no,' said Francis Luke, 'it's not that any more; it's Little Wistaria, for she was the one who welcomed me and has encouraged me in all that I have done.'

'Well, Wistaria, I want to take you home with me.'

'Better speak to her mother,' suggested Francis Luke.

Mrs. James did not take long to make up her mind.

'There's no chance for her here, and if Mr. Luke will see her every day, she may go,' said Mother James.

So it was agreed, and Mrs. Stokes was surprised that evening to have what she called 'a little gypsy' on her hands.

IV

'WHY DO THE HEATHEN RAGE?'

Jenkins and O'Riley set to work at once to gather the material for the school. Their progress was slow, but they were determined men and would not seek outside help.

'My house will be good enough place until the school's ready,' said Jenkins. Francis Luke was well satisfied, for he feared that the new school-house might be cold in the winter months, and Jenkins' house, though small, was cosy and comfortable.

Every Sunday afternoon Wistaria walked out with Francis Luke, and these walks were occasions never to be forgotten by either. Wistaria drank of Francis Luke's spirit, his devotion to and love for Christ, and he was cheered, brightened, and inspired by her love, vivacious ways, and her enthusiasm.

When the days were too stormy or snow too deep to walk, Dr. Stokes drove them out. Only three Sundays during the winter did Francis Luke fail to visit Irishtown. Then Jenkins and O'Riley took up their tasks, or rather O'Riley and Jenkins, for O'Riley was the more impetuous spirit and had the readier tongue. Thus again the impetuous Peter outstripped the loving John.

The men worked hard in the woods all winter, cutting logs and cordwood. The latter they sold for a living, and the former they traded for lumber for the new school. The women and children saved and seconded the efforts of the men, and so by spring all the necessary material for the new school was in sight.

With glad hearts, prayers, and rejoicings the foundation was laid. The woods were beautiful with spring flowers when the building was completed, and the children gathered these wild flowers in abundance for the opening ceremonies. 'Yes,' Francis Luke said, as he looked on them in love, 'the wild things may come to the praise of their Lord. Fit emblems they are of the children gathered here.'

The Rev. Mr. Text, Dr. Stokes, and many other friends from the town were at the dedicatory services. Little Wistaria had made remarkable progress in mastering the art of organ-playing, and was duly installed as the organist of the school; but on the opening day, after playing one piece, she gave place to Edith Stokes, the beautiful daughter of the doctor and the donor of the organ.

The contrast in these two young women was very great. Edith was so fair and Wistaria was so dark. Edith had been trained with all the exquisite taste of the most cultured home and yet, withal, her own desires had not been for the best things, the things of the spirit. She thought more of dress and show, of the attention she received from men, older and younger, and she was jealous of the

loving care her father showered upon 'the little gypsy.'

Wistaria, we know already, had survived a most neglected childhood. Unlettered, uncultured, unloved, she had grown until that Sunday when she met Francis Luke. Then her heart was strangely touched. She had her eyes gradually opened to the light by Francis Luke, by Mary Moxom, and then, through the kindness of Dr. Stokes, by her teachers. But her thoughts and desires were all for Christ and His love, and of loving and serving her fellows as He and Francis Luke did.

At first she was merely tolerated by Edith Stokes and her mother. 'A freak of father's,' they would say in explanation of her presence to their friends. But Wistaria was dwelling in Christ, where such slights might sting but could not overthrow. And in the end, her own sweet life of prayer and patience, of love and fidelity, won. Edith then could not do enough for her to atone for her former rudeness; and the child of culture sat at the feet of the little gypsy to learn of Christ.

Edith's love for Wistaria was very transparent on the day of the dedication, and nothing that she did—and her kind deeds were many—won the hearts of the people so much as her singing a duet with Wistaria.

Dr. Stokes wanted to adopt Wistaria. She had brought such blessings to his home. But Francis Luke forbade him rob her mother and her neighbourhood.

'Educate her as far as you like, but send her back to them,' was his advice.

That neighbourhood was still far from being won to Christ, Francis Luke well knew; but of the active opposition and the steady persecution he was not so well aware until it burst into flame.

Old James had not thrown down his arms of rebellion, and when old Moxom was released from jail and found that his girls had changed their lives—for he had been wont to live upon their shame—he was furious. These men roused other opponents of the reform to action. They found a tool to hand in old Mother McGregor, the virago of the settlement.

The second Sunday after the new school was opened the men gave Mrs. McGregor liquor until she was drunk, and then sent her into the school to create a disturbance and, if possible, break it up.

She burst in with a curse and stormed up to the front, shaking her fist at the superintendent and threatening to thrash him. Francis Luke merely looked calmly at her, and taking him for their model, the whole school was breathlessly quiet. Up between the seats the woman staggered, and stopped in front of the superintendent. She was surprised that there was no opposition, and her whisky courage was quickly oozing away.

'If you wasn't such a pink-faced weakling, I'd swat the face off you,' she said.

There was no noise but what she created. Francis Luke looked at the poor drunken woman

in pity. She looked around frightened, staggered back into a chair and began to cry.

Mary Moxom came over from her desk and put her arm around her neck.

'Don't cry, mother,' said Mary, very kindly. 'Jesus wants to bless you as He has blessed us. Come with me.'

The old woman rose as she was bidden, and Mary led her to the Bible class.

The school then went on with its work as though there had been no disturbance.

After a few minutes' rest, old Mother McGregor rose and staggered out.

The men were waiting around, hoping to have seen some fun, at least some children running out and other commotion, and they were greatly disappointed when they saw her coming out quietly and alone.

'You're no good,' they declared to her. 'You take your whisky and don't do as you promised.'

'Leave me go, leave me go,' she said, shaking off one of the men. 'And let me tell you, I'll thrash the first man that lays a finger on that supertent. He's got more grit than a dozen of you liver-hearts. Go home, go home, and leave him be. If you haven't the hearts to be good, leave them be that has.'

The men were cowed by her tongue and threatening manner. She reeled past them, and most of the men followed her, quietly going to their homes. The two leaders hung around, still vowing vengeance.

V

'LOVE SUFFERETH LONG; ENDURETH ALL THINGS'

The Sunday school, however, had peace for some time from its persecutors, and great good was done. Francis Luke was practical in his ideas and methods, and, failing to have a public school established, he encouraged Mary Moxom in her endeavours to teach the children the rudiments of an education. He was seconded in all his efforts by the self-sacrificing spirit of the people who attended the Sunday school, and the generosity of the Church-people of the town. In this way Mary was appointed teacher at a small salary, and the school was opened for a few hours every day.

Francis Luke's health varied for some time, but it steadily improved for two years. In the third year there was a perceptible decline. With anxious hearts the people of Irishtown watched him. O'Riley and Jenkins had become tolerable workers in the school. Mrs. James had also proved apt to learn and also apt to teach. She had endured, perhaps, more persecution and hardships, because of the hardness of her husband's heart and the ferocity of his opposition to things religious, than any other member of the Sunday school. Yet, sustained by the grace of God and the love and faith of Wistaria, she pressed onward, and God blessed her to the saving of her other children.

After keeping Wistaria for two years, Dr. Stokes reluctantly consented to her returning to her people. Her mother and brothers and sister welcomed her with open arms. Her father left the house and spent the next two weeks in the town, drinking. When he came home he demanded her money. She said that she had none to give. He beat her, tore her dress from her back, and, gathering as many of her things, the neat things that Edith Stokes had taken such pains to provide her, as he could lay his hands on, he went away.

Down to the saloon in the town he went and offered these things for more drink. At first the hotel-keeper refused to take them, but after examining them and seeing that they were so good and beautiful, he took them and put them carefully away. Then he gave James the liquor, and in serving it he joked about the change in Irishtown, sneered at the work of Francis Luke to elevate the people, and wound up his ribaldry by a reference to the girls and women of the place.

James stood all these jokes, and laughed with the hotel-keeper until the character of the women of the place was insulted. Stung by these reproaches, he threw down the glass from which he had been drinking, struck the hotel-keeper a blow on the mouth that silenced him, and then he hastened away with new ideas, both of the saloon-keepers and of the work that Francis Luke was doing.

‘He saved my girl from being the prey of

monkeys and snakes like him,' exclaimed James, 'and I've been kicking against him and been pounding her for getting on her feet. God, O God, help me!'

He walked over to Rowley and Co.'s and asked to see Francis Luke. Francis' cough was very bad, and after a coughing spell that wrenched James' very heartstrings, Francis greeted him very kindly.

'Hear me through, and then tell me what to do,' said James, bluntly; and he told Francis all that had happened.

'Now, God helping me, I'll be a fool no longer. You are in the right, and I've been in the wrong. Tell me what's right, and I'll do it or die.'

Francis took James to his home for dinner, and talked long and kindly to him. He then went with him to Dr. Stokes, whom James thanked for his kindness to his daughter.

'Never mention it, my friend,' said Dr. Stokes. 'She has more than repaid for her keep. If God has enabled me to clothe her and give her a little education, she has been His instrument to open the eyes of some in our home and clothe them with the garments of salvation.'

James was deeply touched at these words. He felt himself more and more of a brute for laying unkind hands on such a girl.

'Let me out, please,' he said abruptly, as he arose and left the doctor's office.

Dr. Stokes and Francis looked at each other a moment. They had smelt liquor on the man,

and now feared that he had gone back to the saloon.

‘Let us pray for him,’ said Francis Luke.

The two men knelt in prayer for James and for the other members of his family. But James had not returned to the saloon, he had taken the shortest road to his own home, and hastened over it as fast as he could walk.

He hurried into the house, and was about to speak when he fell in a faint.

‘Father!’ exclaimed Wistaria, as she jumped to his rescue. She brought water, bathed his face and soothed him, while her mother coolly came up, looked at him and loosened his neckband.

She had almost cursed her husband after what he had done to Wistaria, but her daughter had pled with her not to say an unkind word and not to mention to any one what he had done. But it was hard for the mother to restrain her indignation. Now that her husband had returned, she thought that he was only drunk, and that when he awakened there would be other disgraceful scenes.

‘Little Witch, Little Witch,’ said the father, struggling to regain his consciousness.

‘Yes, father dear ; what can I do for you ?’

‘God—for—give—me.’

‘He will, father ; He has forgiven me.’

‘Little Witch, will—she—forgive—me ?’

‘Yes, father ; she holds nothing against you.’

‘He’s raving,’ said the doubting mother.

‘Oh, mother, do not doubt,’ pleaded Wistaria.

'Let us believe that God will answer our prayers.'

'Water, little girl.'

Wistaria gave him a drink.

'Mother has reason to doubt me,' said he, struggling up to a sitting posture; 'but, God helping me, I'm going to be a new man. I guess the hard walk home has been too much for me after my drunk. Too bad that I've been such a father; but you'll help me to be good.'

Wistaria threw her arms around her father's neck and wept, and even the doubting mother shed tears; while her little ones left the hiding-places to which they had flown on the approach of their father, and now came to her side.

After making his peace with his family, James went out to find old man Moxom.

VI

'THE LAMP OF THE WICKED SHALL BE PUT OUT'

'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.'

James had determined not only to tell Moxom of his own change of life, but also of the taunts of the hotel-keeper, hoping that they would rouse his moral nature. He sought for him at his home, and then around the settlement, but in vain. As he was crossing a little gully, he noticed a number of the roving, half-wild pigs that had helped to give

the nickname of 'Irishtown' to the settlement, and was attracted by their actions and gruntings. Hastening to the place, he was horrified to find the body of old Moxom, cold in death. He had fallen down, and had apparently died, where he had fallen, without a struggle. It was a pitiful end, even to such a life as Moxom's.

'Like a beast he lived,' commented James, 'and such an end might have been mine. O God, I've been saved just in time.'

He called loudly for help. Jenkins and some other men heard the call, and came to him. They too were shocked at the sight that met them, but they quickly set to work. A stretcher was made, and the body was taken into the nearest house. Here the body was laid out for burial, and a decent coffin was soon made for it by Jenkins. Fortunately the head was not mutilated, and the whole truth was never told to his daughters. Mary was nearly broken-hearted when she heard of her father's death. Sarah was rather glad to be relieved of such a monster of a father. She had known nothing good of him, poor girl; neither had Mary, but the latter had prayed for his salvation, and now his sad end crushed her loving hopes, and she sorrowed with a grief too deep for words.

The body was quietly buried, Jenkins uttering a short prayer at the grave and giving what consolation he could to the daughters.

Mary was almost incapable of work for some time, and sought Wistaria to carry on her work. Though very young for such work, Wistaria did

her best, but in a few days she visited Mary and besought her to return, not only for the work's sake, but she instinctively felt that Mary's one relief from the cloud that hovered over her was self-denying work, that would help her to forget her sorrow in helping to bear the sorrows and burdens of others. When Mary did return, however, she managed to retain Wistaria as her assistant. Hand in hand, and heart with heart, they continued their work for the good of the place.

James and others turned their attention to gardening, and found that Nature there was kind to the industrious and sober, and that they had no fault to find with the market of the town. Prosperity was even beginning to smile upon Irishtown, and the people began to think of franchises, municipal duties, and a real place in the political world.

But all these blessings did not close their eyes to the steady decline of the strength of their benefactor, Francis Luke. It was only very rarely now that he came to see them, but when he did, it was to receive the honours of a prince. He smiled upon them, he could speak very little. They crowded round him just to touch him and bless him.

Then he was confined entirely to his bed.

'You must go and 'tend to him, Wistaria,' said Jenkins. 'You can rouse him better than any of us. The Lord hears your prayers. Keep him for us as long as you can.'

Jenkins went with Wistaria and offered her services freely to Mrs. Luke. They were gratefully accepted, and Wistaria again had the joy of ministering to the one she had learned to love as a spiritual father, a dear teacher, an intimate friend.

But the best nursing of Wistaria could not now withstand the ravages of the disease. Slowly and only too perceptibly, he faded away before them. Mrs. Luke broke down from time to time, and was only able to return to her duty because of the spirit and the ministrations of Wistaria.

'Francis found an angel when he found you,' Mrs. Luke would declare as she fed upon Wistaria's love and was sustained by her faith.

'No, he only found a gypsy, a little witch,' Wistaria would reply brightly, 'and he led her to Jesus. Jesus is the Wonder-Worker. Oh, how Mr. Luke loved Jesus! If we could so love Him, it would be all right.'

'You are right, my dear; but it is not given to all to love Him so,' declared Mrs. Luke, amidst her grief.

'I suppose,' said Wistaria, thoughtfully, 'it is pretty much as we will. If we accept God's care for us in all things, we'll trust all things to Him; but if we limit His love and care, we bear the rest alone with their burdens of doubt and sorrow.'

'Then you accuse me of doubt and needless sorrow!' exclaimed Mrs. Luke.

'I accuse you of nothing. But it seems to me that we must not limit God's love, especially when He loved us so much as to die for us, and tells us

that He will carry ALL our griefs and ALL our sorrows.'

'So He does, my dear, and I'll trust Him more perfectly after this.'

She was fortified in her faith not one day too soon.

That night Dr. Stokes came and stayed. He sent for his pastor, Dr. Text, and for two or three other intimate friends. Wistaria sent messages to Jenkins, O'Riley, and her father. They all came together about midnight.

Francis had told them to rejoice with him, that he was going home to be with Jesus. He besought them to shed no tears on his behalf. The doctor had told him that he would die three years ago, but the Lord had spared him for a wonderful work. His part was now done. There were others raised up to carry it on.

But the natural sorrow of the human heart is deep and will not be suppressed. O'Riley came up to the bedside, stooped and kissed the emaciated hands, and then broke into a paroxysm of sobs.

'He shall wipe away all tears, O'Riley,' said Francis, soothingly; 'won't that be blessed!'

'Ah,' said the ready tongue, 'but you've no tears to wipe away. It's me, poor broken-hearted O'Riley, what you lifted out of the gutter and can't bear the thought of your leavin' us; it's poor O'Riley that the Lord will honour with wipin' his wet eyes. May He mend the broken heart as well! says I.'

'That He will,' says Francis, as a smile played on his face, which, in spite of the devouring disease, had lost none of its sweetness.

'Sing,' requested the dying man.

'Sing!' exclaimed the pastor. 'How can we sing? Our hearts are breaking.'

'Sing "I've reached the land of corn and wine."'

Wistaria alone was able to start the song, and others gradually joined her. Sweetly, tenderly, and yet with a peculiar triumph, the hymn was sung.

Francis Luke closed his eyes as they sang. A seraphic smile was on his face. Dr. Stokes held his hand, watching the uncertain pulse. As the friends were singing the last lines of the second stanza—

'He gently leads me with His hand,
For this is heaven's border-land'—

the pulse ceased its beating, a little tremor crept over the body, and when the chorus was sung, the doctor said quietly—

'He has gone—gone to be with his Saviour.'

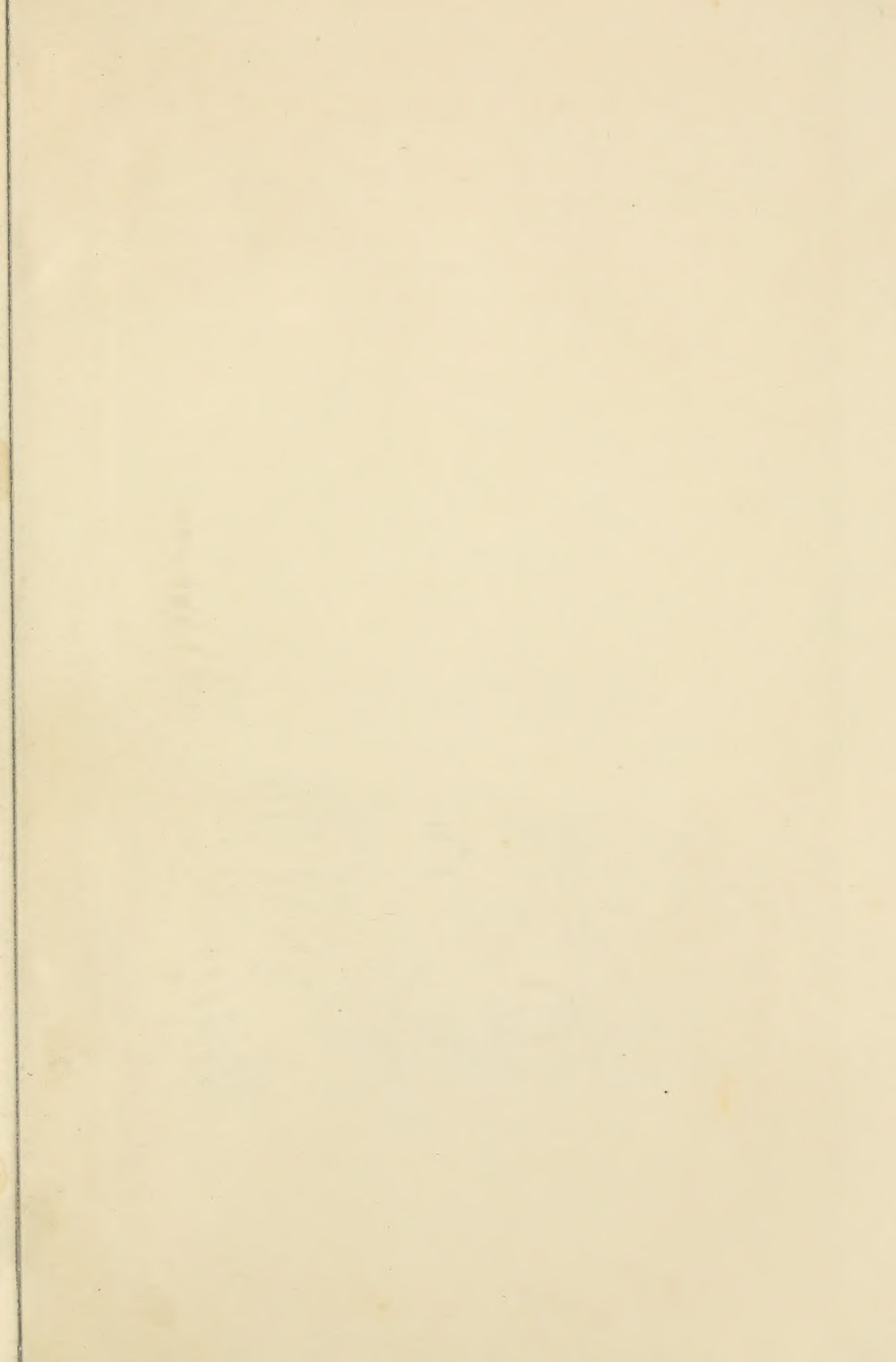
Wistaria sank at the bedside and buried her face in her hands.

'Let us pray,' said the pastor.

They all knelt around that bedside, and the minister lifted his voice to pray; but it was more a thanksgiving at the privilege of witnessing the translation of a saint. His conquering spirit was with them. Living monuments of his devotion

were there. The righteous might die, but their works live on. The pastor prayed most earnestly that all present might be consecrated with the spirit of Francis Luke, and that more might go out, as he had done, into the byways and the hedges, and call in the neglected ones to Jesus.

THE END



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